Kieron Gillen | **Caspar Wijngaard**
Clayton Cowles | Rian Hughes

Volume Three
THE END OF HISTORY

THE POWER FANTASY™

"You stop me, brother, and all you're stopping is a better world."
—Raymond "Heavy" Harris

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March 2026 | Digital Edition | Cover: Caspar Wijngaard
6.625 x 10.25in (168.275 x 260.35mm) | 300dpi CMYK (physical), RGB (digital)

Kieron Gillen | Writer
Caspar Wijngaard | Artist
Clayton Cowles | Letterer
Rian Hughes | Designer
Katie West | Editor

THE
POW
FANT

Volume Three | **THE END OF HISTORY**

Santa Valentina
Was born at the same moment as the first atomic test. An angel, here to protect humanity from annihilation. Can see Etienne's telepathy, and so is aware of his actions.

Etienne Lux
An Apex Telepath ("Omnipath"). Firmly utilitarian. Physically vulnerable, threatening a continent-destroying psychic shockwave if he's killed. Recently seemingly assassinated . . .

Morishita Masumi
Mediocre artist hailed as brilliant by petrified critics, Morishita Masumi is a "dissociation kaiju". If she gets too depressed, ***it*** *emerges. In 1981, Tokyo barely survived.*

Jacky Magus
Leader of the Pyramid. Originally an anarchist punk, he died in 1989 and was replaced by Dev, an acolyte. Not a Superpower, and won't be again until the Pyramid expands.

Raymond "Heavy" Harris
Gravity-controlling revolutionary leader, based in Haven, his floating city and refuge. Aging hippie, still radical. The world's foremost protector of Atomic rights. Father of Kid Ignition.

Eliza Hellbound
Ex-Pyramid member, sold her soul to save the world during the "Second Summer of Love". Recently discovered her long lost husband, Dev, has been posing as Magus.

Atomic 🟢
Extranormal Entity 🔴
Magician 🟡
Human 🔵

Kid Ignition
Heavy's Atomic firebrand son. Physically a superpower, but marginally vulnerable to telepathy. Turned 18 today.

Tonya
Journalist embedded into Haven, Heavy's Atomic commune. Dating Heavy. Was psychically manipulated into leaking information to Etienne.

Isabella
Masumi's lover and PA. Italian diaspora after the destruction of Europe. Repeatedly emotionally stabilised by Etienne.

The General
American General and now Pyramid member. Liaison between Magus and the president, arranging the training of U.S. military personnel into Mages.

The Devil
In 1957, was the first Atomic to rampage publicly. Valentina revealed herself to fight him briefly before Etienne psychically neutered his gift.

The Queen
Appeared in 1989, held a giant party called The Second Summer of Love and tried to drill into hell, collapsing reality. Stopped by Eliza in a battle that destroyed Europe.

The Mumbai Atomic
Precognizant Atomic who emerged in 1981. Her power going out of control, she predicted Heavy's child would be a Superpower.

The Major
American-aligned "Superpower". Killed in 1981 by Heavy when Magus revealed he wasn't nearly as powerful as he pretended to be.

Chapter Twelve | **LET THERE BE LIGHT**

Events have cascaded since Etienne Lux killed the U.S. president, prompting Magus to ally with America to gain more recruits to expand the Pyramid and regain his lost power. Eliza and Jacky Magus conspired to assassinate Etienne at the gathering to ascertain whether or not Kid Ignition was a Superpower. Psychically sealing the arena to prevent Etienne's failsafe killing a continent, they appear to succeed – however, unknown to them, Etienne appears to be alive in New York, in a new body, somehow.

MELBOURNE, 1999.
Seriously: take a big breath, everyone.
Think about what this means.

Your boy's safe now. You know Etienne.
Yeah, totally safe... except from you.
Christ, don't *say* it.
Let's get out of here.
Masumi. It's going to be okay.
We love you and will look after you.
Like you looked after Etienne?
She turned him into modern art.
Valentina-- I'm sorry. This is a sin, but...it *was* necessary.
Shut up.
You have no idea what you've done.

Talk to me, Etienne.
I know you're listening.
Talk to me...
...or I'll just come to you.

AUGUST 6TH, 1945. THE NECKER-ENFANTS MALADES HOSPITAL, PARIS, FRANCE.
An American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima.
That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of TNT...
Turn it off! I can't think!
The mother is gone. No pulse.
We can save the child. Come on... we...
We've lost him, too.

Doctor!
He's breathing.
He's just entirely non-responsive.
No family. A boy with his obvious disadvantages. He has no life.
It'd be kinder if nature took its course...
No. We give him every chance.
Yes, that's more ethical.

1947.
Sir!
Which child has been on full medical support for two years?
This one, sir.
Why do we have all these medical resources for one negro child?
What's this swelling? Is it a brain tumor?
Are we wasting morphine, too?
This can't continue. This is...
Carry on.

1948.
It's just awful. After the fall, the boy is in a perpetual vegetative state.
His family are in a terrible way.
1949.
Absolutely brain dead.
Horrible to say, but at least no family. And...
Actually, no. I don't know how, but I think he's not brain dead.
He's conscious.
1950.
Awful accident. Family gone in the fire.
He'll be in a coma forever.
His fingers are twitching. It--
No. They're not. Must have been my imagination.
"Come on, Etienne. I know you're there...

1952.
"...what are you waiting for?"
Hmm?
Oh... this is a miracle.
Close enough.
You don't need to tell me. My family didn't survive the car crash.
I...**heard** you say it. When I was... asleep.
It's a tragedy, but we must make the best of it.
Thank you?

"Okay, Etienne. Enough."

I'm coming to visit.
Do I need to kick down the door, Captain Sulky-pants?
1989
That won't be necessary.
I know you would be, but I have to ask.
You were careful?
Of course I was.
I've never visited in all these years, hun. I've been careful for ***decades.***
Though I still don't get it. Why New York?
Are you that big a pizza fanboy?
What's the alternative? A desert base? No. If I was discovered, I'd be targeted and no one would blink.
If New York is ever annihilated, the world has significant problems.
How do you find the--er--staff?
Vegetative people without relatives who have donated their bodies to science.
The most ethical proxies, but still fundamentally disrespectful. I make donations to a lot of charities.
With money you get from ethically unethical stock market manipulation, right?
Please. I have philanthropic backers. I find old, rich people who I believe are sufficiently ethical and pitch it.
If they say yes, they change their will in my Foundation's favour and I delete their memory of the experience.
Still-- I'm aware my infrastructure needs to grow every day.
If I have to move, it'll be difficult now. So many eyes, and I'm hardly mobile anymore.
How heavy ***are*** you?

01
Nearly five tons.
You should get some exercise.
Valentina. You make jokes, but you should know how much I appreciate your kindness.

When I first told you about this and you ***hugged*** me?
It meant a lot. That you never pried before then, too.
I saw the beams of telepathic energy crossing the globe. Didn't seem to be doing anything mean. Wasn't my business.
But... hey, new body. So...you have a type?
I spent years in a hospital bed rather than hide the fact.
I ***am*** a Black man.
It'd have been easier for you not to be.
My utilitarianism presupposes that the world is worth saving.
It would be a mistake to make me question that assumption.
Okay. Take the moral high ground, won't you.
...You ***are*** going to take the moral high ground? What ***are*** you going to do?
Think. Same as I ever do. All I ever do, in fact.
What are ***you*** going to do?

That depends on what *you* do.
And a reminder, hun... be careful.
I let you do ***a lot.*** I won't let you do ***everything.***
You push too far, and I ***will*** step in.
Yes. Something I've been aware of since you threatened to annihilate me on a street corner.
You got it. See, nothing much has changed.
Quite. Exactly like how nothing ever changes in a game of Jenga.

FUCK YEAH!!!
"Etienne is dead, and they're all partying."
He seemed nice. I'm sorry, Mia Bella. I never really talked to him. I don't think he even knew who I was.
He did. Etienne paid attention to everything. And...
...do you think we're doomed?
Be honest.

I think we're all going to die.
Oh, good.
Shared beliefs are crucial in relationships.
You okay?
Yes. No. Etienne is... history. He *was* history. Our history.
Christ, and he goes out the way he lived: spoiling the party. The brilliant asshole of a...
Wait. Is that it?
It is.
The most respectful copy edit of my life.
TIME
MEET KID IGNITION THE SEVENTH SUPERPOWER
I *think* they're scared of my boyfriend.
Well...

"...at least *someone* understands subtext."
With Lux gone, we've progressed to a previously untenable plan.
We have a submarine outside Australia. It can launch nukes at short enough range that Valentina should miss it.
When Haven leaves Australia, we will take it out of the sky.
Give me time.
We can work something else out.
Jacky. You're not in charge. You promised the American century, but if we don't act now, it is the *Atomic* century.
You'd prefer atomic fucking war?
Nuclear war.
Atomic war is what we'll get if we don't take this chance.
Give us a better option. You have until it leaves Australian airspace, Jacky.

Presidential orders are go.
Ready launch positions.
Is that the mag? Let me...
Seventh Superpower?
It was already printed before... Etienne.
Too late to change.
YOINK
Out with the old, in with the new.

Someone. Do something!
Do something!
He's dead.
Magus. I'll kill the--
He's not dead.

He's alive.
He's just unresponsive.
T
MEET KID IGNITIO
THE SEVENTH
SUPERPOWER
TIME

Chapter Thirteen | **SAINT ETIENNE**

HAVEN, 1999.
Don't worry...
...I'll be back soon.
Heavy...
...are you going to do something stupid?
Nah...
...they did.

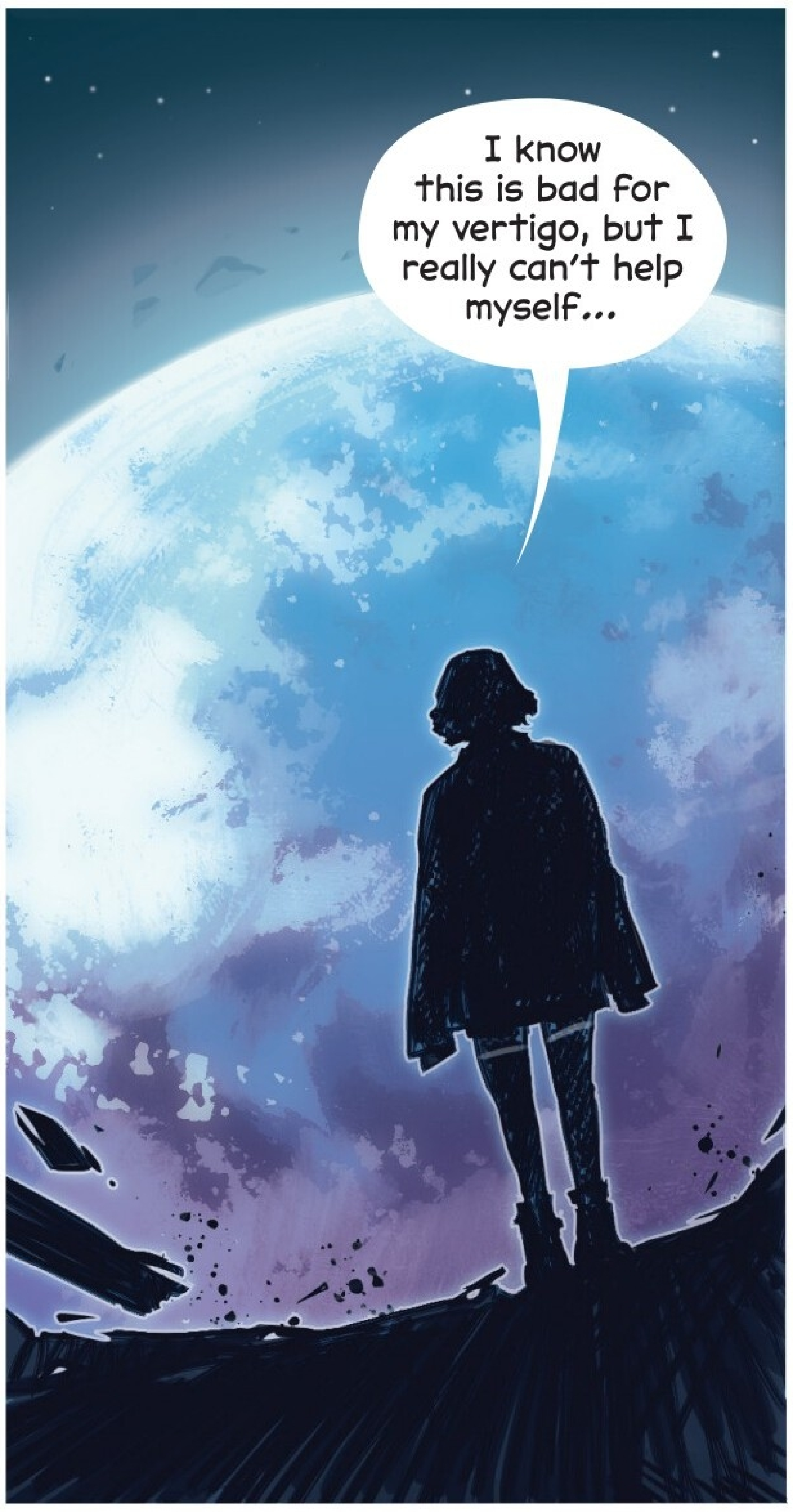
Etienne. I felt a tingle, let myself get sensitive and...**big gravity pulse.**
Are you going to do something?
*Herein lies the problem, I **have** done something.*
I left Heavy's child in a vegetative state.
I'd normally clear it up... but I'm dead...
*...and as I'm dead, it's up to **you** to do something.*

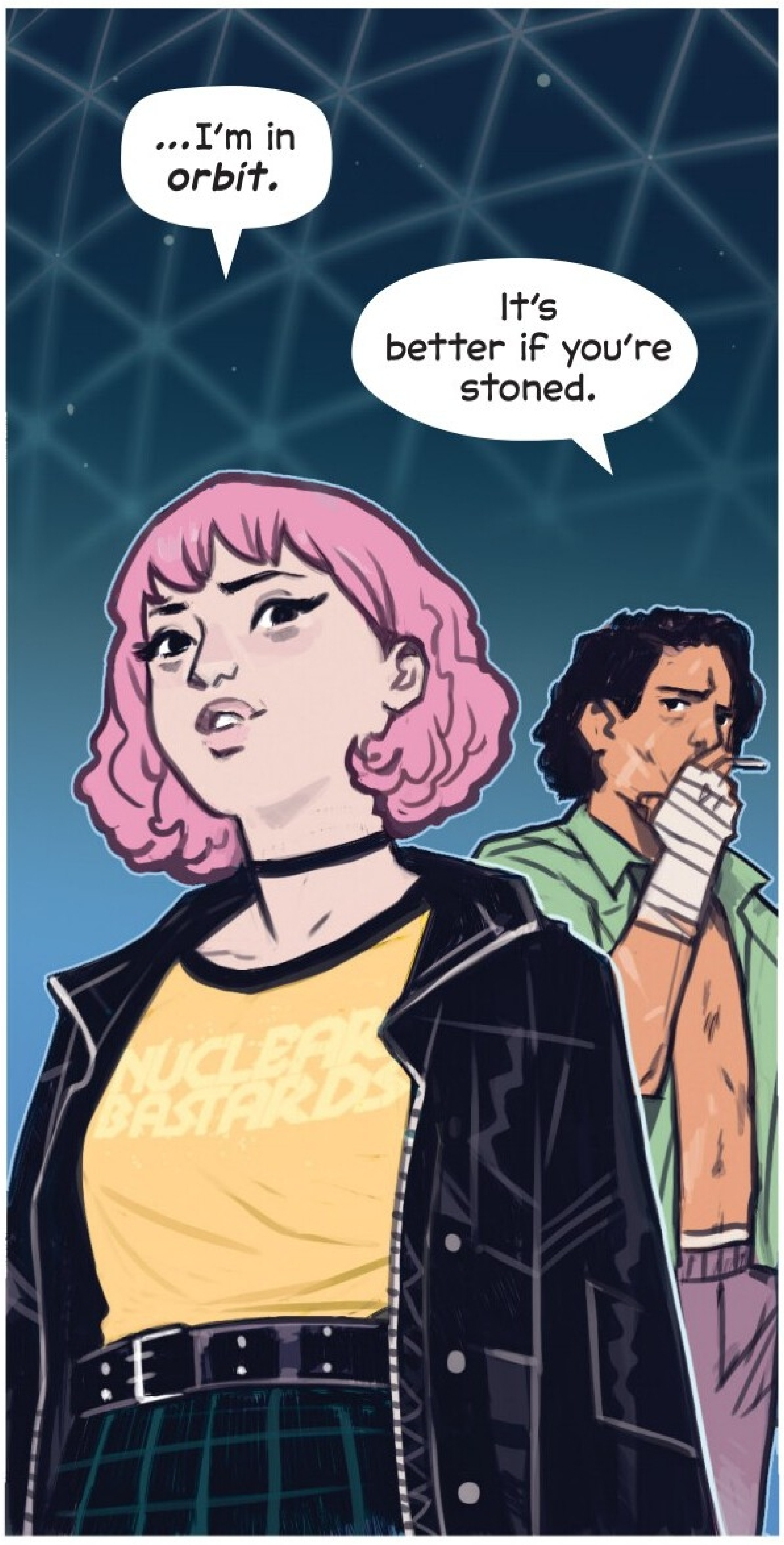
THE PYRAMID.
They're fucking radio rental!
Dev. Speaking in tongues?
Radio rental. Mental. Rhyming slang it's...oh, *fuck.*
I will be ***so glad*** when I don't have to do this anymore. ***Any*** of it.
My colonial overlords are going to launch nukes at Haven when it leaves Australian airspace.
You made my mistake.
A deal with the devil.
Don't rub it in too much.
If we can keep Haven inside Australia, we can play for time and work out something else to--
THDD
THNK
THDD
Hail?
That's too big for hail.
THNK

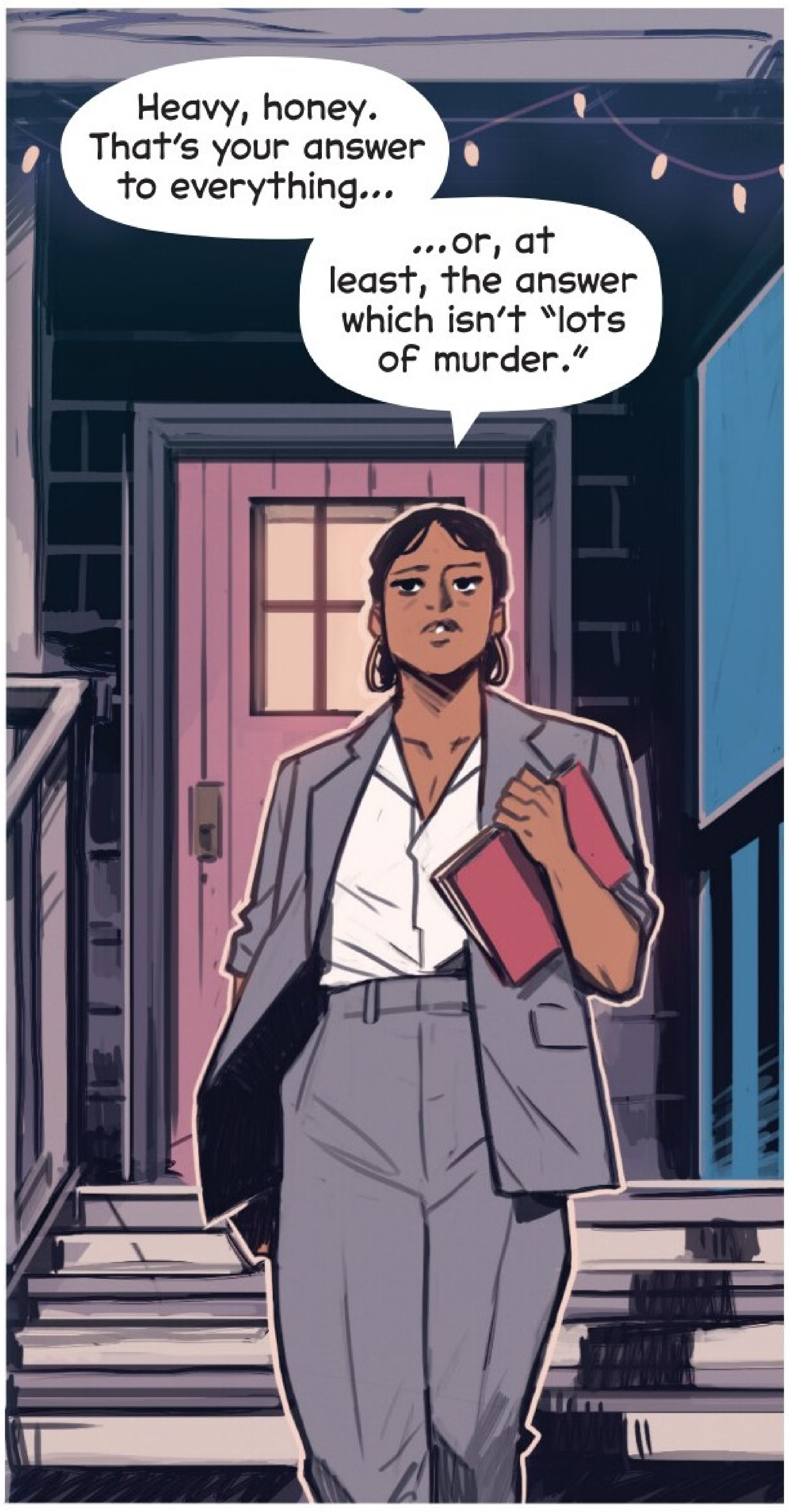
THNK
THDD
THNK
That was your Texas training camp.
Next up: Miami.

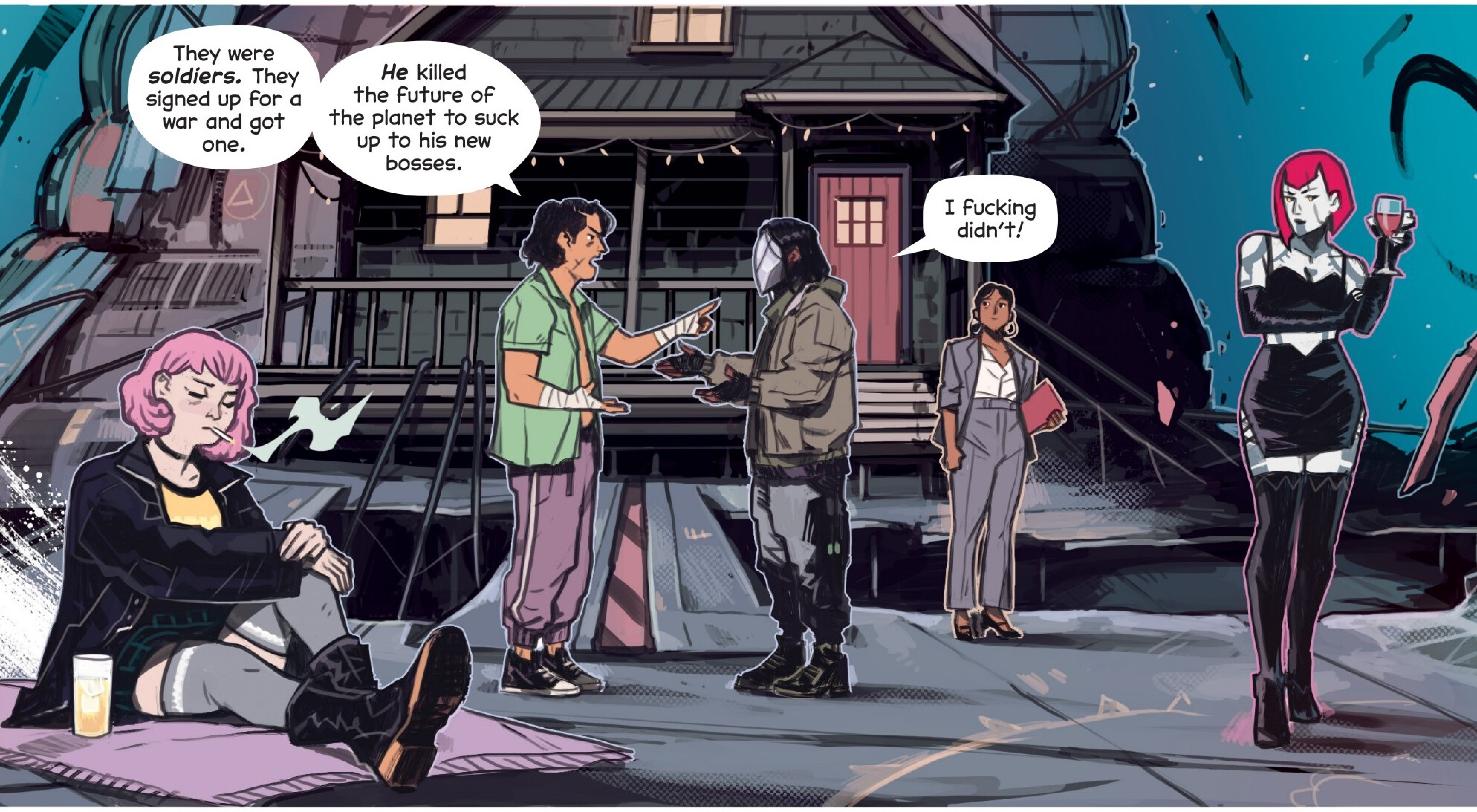
I'm taking the Pyramid apart, piece by piece.
You don't get to have a gang anymore.
What the *fuck* are you doing? I...
Are you still high? Have you forgotten what happens if you move on me?
Move on *us.*
No, I remember...so I nudged a nice big comet in line to hit the Earth.
If you come at me, sister, and *actually* win, then it's *still* game over.
Is this asshole worth it, Eliza? Really?
He fucked up my boy.
Or were you in on it, too?
No, I... You did *what?*
What?! No! I fucking didn't? I...
Seriously, Heavy. I don't need her to take Haven out of the sky.
Stand down.
You're not a Superpower.
He's taken his pound of flesh for something I had fuck all to do with...
...but he *will* back down.
Magus to Pyramid. Target Haven.
I repeat: Kill All Hippies--

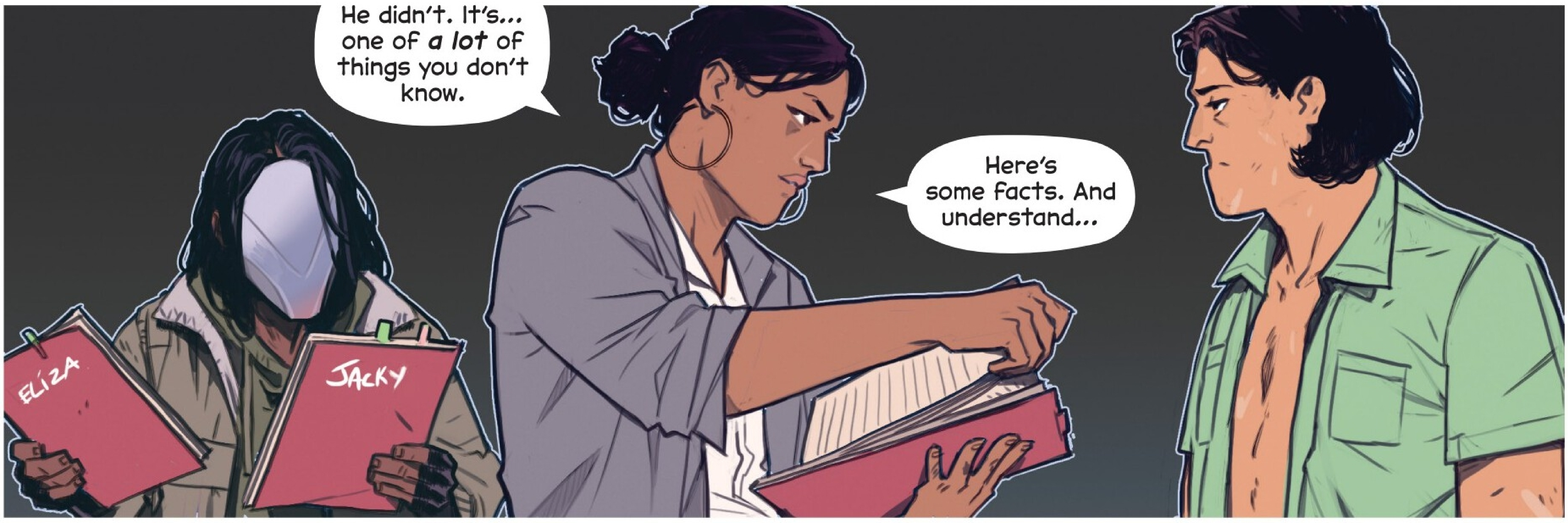
No, you don't!
Just stop!
It doesn't end like this!
He killed the Atomic Future, Val.
He as good as killed my boy.
He didn't do it.
Trust me.
Then who the fucking hell did?
You? Her? Masumi?
Today we cool this down with all our people.
Tomorrow. My place. The whole gang.
I'm going to explain everything.


I know this is bad for my vertigo, but I really can't help myself...


...I'm in ***orbit.***
It's better if you're stoned.
NUCLEAR BASTARDS


Heavy, honey. That's your answer to everything...
...or, at least, the answer which isn't "lots of murder."


They were ***soldiers.*** They signed up for a war and got one.
He killed the future of the planet to suck up to his new bosses.
I fucking didn't!


He didn't. It's... one of ***a lot*** of things you don't know.
Here's some facts. And understand...
ELIZA
JACKY

...I'm sharing this as I know you can handle it.
I've seen you all be good. Eliza and Magus were wrong to go for Et, but right in what they *said.*
We don't need to be sneaky.
We can decide to be better.
...Etienne has been using brain-dead bodies as a puppet show since 1952. His real body is...in New York.
You have maps.
I think I knocked back a few at a bar on that corner.
JACKY
I will, of course, be moving shortly.
Oh, Valentina. We're actually doing it.
Very well.
Yes, it was me. America was petrified, and planning a nuclear response to Heavy's aggressive Superpower proliferation.
I re-established the status quo.

Etienne?!
Motherfucker.
I'm sorry. I wish I could have been gentler. Limited resistance makes it harder to cut off an ability. One has to break the locks.
I'm glad I could spare him at all. It could be worse. For example, I couldn't spare that poor woman in Mumbai.
"Her looking into the future had a quantum-collapsing effect: by looking, she was removing free will. She was going to see the end of the world, and so create it.
"I couldn't break *or* limit her gift. I *could* kill her. I did.
"The problem happens when I can't do anything. Then...
"...Valentina, are you *sure* you want this?"
Sure am.
Very well. With those I cannot touch, I have made deals and compromises to ensure good behaviour.
You know this, Heavy. I've killed enough mostly-guilty state employees across the world to stop you doing worse.
It was only the guilty.
The guilty, plus the ones I knew you couldn't be convinced were innocent...
I didn't ask for anything.
Go on. She can handle it.
You didn't. But...

I *have* edited the emotional responses of those around you to ease your passage through this sharp-edged world.
Most relevantly, Isabella.
You messed with Isabella?
...She doesn't love me?
No, she loves you. Dating you is a stressful endeavour. When it's too much, I ease that...and delete the memory of the psychic surgery.
She came to *me,* every time.
Every time.
Your fault, Valentina.
It's everyone's fault. I'll be fine. I--
I'll be fine.

Okay... you *killed* the Mumbai chick. You crippled Kid Ignition.
But you turned off the Devil back in the 1950s...and he was fine.
So, the million-dollar question...
How many Atomics have you done it to?
Less than two hundred.
A little over one hundred would have had Superpower-level destructive capacity.
Holy fuck. You fucking traitor.
It only takes one man like the Devil to end the world. I can't risk any.
You. Me. Your son. *Every* Superpower is an existential threat.
I'm sorry, too. To you all. I knew all of this and let it happen. Less than he'd have done if left to his lonesome, but more than I should.
When I say *we* have to be better, that includes me. I--
A question.

Is Etienne giving me visions?
I'm sorry.
I don't know what you mean.
Is he telling the truth, angel?
Yup.

Eliza, I'm glad you didn't off this fuck, because I'm going to.
Are you, Heavy? Yes, you could now. Valentina has given you the map...
...but you know my failsafe. Are you really willing to kill America to get revenge?
It's not just revenge.
It's buying a chance of a better world instead of your fearful bullshit.
Don't you want to know why *they* tried to kill me?
They weren't lying. He's afraid of my growing power. He thinks he can grow his own power to outstrip me.
He also believes he can be president... which wouldn't be the worst thing, but...
...ultimately, it doesn't matter.

Magus is right. I **am** growing more powerful.
In a few years' time I will be able to perform intricate work on every single person on Earth, so swiftly that Valentina wouldn't be able to stop me.
If the problem is human nature, we should change human nature.
What fucked up plan do you have here, man?
...
The thing inside us can be gone in an afternoon.
The thing which makes children fight over toys. The thing we try to tame, and history shows how poorly we achieve that.
We can love one another, freely, without fear, hatred.
Are they talking to each other?
They're talking to each other.
Don't believe his bullshit, Heavy!
He turned your kid's brain into salad!

In a few years' time, he thinks he can change everyone on the planet before Valentina can stop him.
Genocide of the asshole in our heads.
A day for honesty.
Very well.
You are all so naive.
I was born in *1945.* I lay in my crib, immobile, but could make out the camps.
I learned. I realised the privilege and horror of being able to watch people die for my own moral education.
After my first week, I turned to history, the deeds of man.
By the end of the month, I could see that I wanted nothing to do with it and the pretty empires made of corpses.
The only ethical thing to do was end it.
Who made *you* God?
No one. But God hasn't done the job particularly well, and here we are.
It's up to those with power to change that, and if we don't, all the hell that remains is ***on us.***

Oh, Etienne. Really? Just a more complicated way to take over the world?
I'm here to protect humanity. That means "humanity," not whatever you're going to cook up.
You have faith in the human nature that, time and time again, has treated humans as cattle--worse than cattle.
You come from Heaven, Valentina. I come from Earth.
I would have been thrown out with the trash if I hadn't had power.
"Magus explained our world. Your heaven is fixed and eternal. Below, the churning fluid outside time. *We* are the single strip between.
"We only have one chance. *I* only have one chance. You make me roll the dice, every day. Remember how I saved Malcolm X *five times* before they got him?
THE
"Your fault, Valentina. Every time anyone dies I could have saved, it's your fault."
You're my oldest friend. I love you.
I say this with all the rage my chained heart can muster:
Your morals are going to kill us all.
There is no need to wait, even. Just agree to sit back. You don't stop so many meat grinders across the world...
...would you really stop a perfectly peaceful plan that would leave *everyone* a lot happier?
What makes you so sure you know what makes people happier, Etienne?

...You're right. Maybe I don't. It's in the open now, so we can work on this together.
Work out what being happier--being *better*--means.
All I need to do is live a little longer.
You don't even have to forgive me.
Kill me when it's done, if you have to.
After this, the Atomics will be safe--from themselves and each other. I can't remove guns from this world--but I can ensure that no one wants to pull a trigger.
If I had done this when I was first able, I wouldn't have had to do *any* of the awful things I did.
You *did* do them.
I did. What do you want? Love or vengeance? Utopia or righteous revolution?
A better world or to be trapped forever as a rebel in this one?

What happened?
The telepathy cut out.
The--
No.

I threw him into space.
His failsafe...
America? All of America? Is that Canada? Is that Mexico? Is that--
Wait...
No one else has died.
There's no failsafe.
That fucking cunt!
All these years, and **he** was ***bluffing,*** I...
BZZT
BZZT
BZZT

"If you're reading this, I'm dead.
"I didn't activate my failsafe.
"The only ethical thing to ever do with the nuclear button is not press it.
"Good luck."

Chapter Fourteen | **PUBLISH & BE DAMNED**

MANCHESTER, 1999.
Are you there?
What is Hell like?

HAVEN.
You *arrogant* shit!
You *stupid* arrogant shit!
Get the fuck away from my boy.
You've done enough.
I sold her such hopes. Him, too.
I built a house of cards and Etienne kicked it down.
Yeah, and then *you* kicked down a whole city block.

I had to do it then. He'd have been gone if I didn't.
I'm not proud of it, but...
It's over, right?
Us.
You risked a *continent* because you were pissed off.
That's not you being Mr. Cold Realpolitik Guy.
That's a guy in a bar throwing a punch.
What would *you* have done?
Nothing. I can't throw people into space! That you did is...
We're all lucky Etienne was a better man than you.
You didn't know him.
Alex wasn't the first.
Etienne turned off over *100 Superpowers.*
Including you.

Hey, breakfast time. You have to eat, *Mia Bella.*
I know this is all hard, but...
What's that?
I'm starting on something new.
I didn't mean to disturb you.
You didn't. I... it's okay.
I just started.
Let's go and get ice cream!

"Her unrestrained touch could have frayed the boundaries between the higher and lower realms, collapsing all reality at will."
Blah, blah, blah.
You'd have been able to poke holes in existence.
He stopped you being everything you could have been.
Thank god, Heavy.
Oh, right. So you prefer to sit on the sidelines and watch Atomic genocide?
You fucked-up, posturing, delusional, hippie idiot.

If all Atomics just had glowy fingers, do you think I'd deal with more shit for being *Atomic* or being *Black?*
If *you* didn't exist, and I was an average White girl, it'd be my cool party trick.
Okay. We're getting heated. I...know it's complicated.
But the power. You could've changed the world.
I'm heading home. Magus pulled strings to clear the police stuff.
I can get back to my life.
What are you going to do?
ZZZRPP
What I always do when I'm pissed off.
Write.

THE PYRAMID.
Are you awake?
I am now, you weirdo.
What's wrong?
God talked to me.
He's stopped.
You learned from Magus. You taught me what he didn't want me to know.
But it was practice, not theory. How to, not...everything else.
So I have been wondering...
...what's being in Hell actually like?

This is nice.
It is.
We need to break up.
No. You... *can't.*
I love you.
I love you, too. I don't think that matters. You need to be out.
I have been selfish and spoiled and... narcissistic.
Yes, but you have bad traits, too!
Please, don't make this harder.
Why?
Etienne repeatedly manipulated your emotions.

...I never asked him to do anything.
Yeah, but... "never asked." You've thought about it.
When you *did* ask, he did his business, and then made you forget it was done.
You shouldn't be with someone who makes you scared.
I don't want you to be afraid of me.
You'd do anything for me, I think...but that's one thing you can't do. So...
Oh, Masumi. I...
What now?
I'm your girlfriend *and* your job.
Take a year's wages. Find a place, and I'll pay for it.
"This is the ethical thing to do."

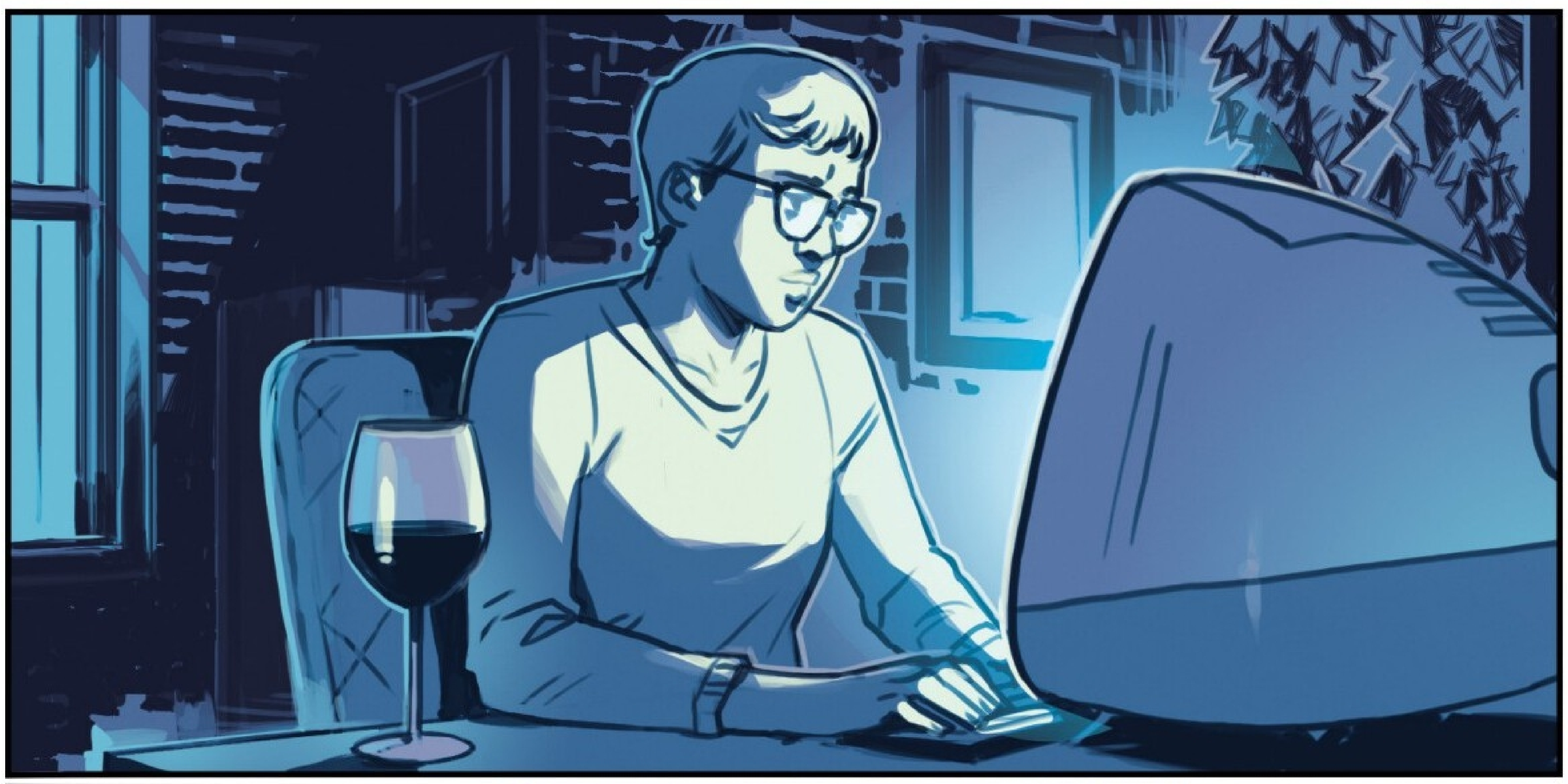
I swear, you two muddy-funsters.
I'd have worked it out in time.
Look at this...
...his body drops a fraction of a second *before* Eliza annihilates him.
The strings are cut.
Thanks for making me watch that again, but, yeah, big brain, you got us.
Shall I bake another cake and we can have a Magus Is So Clever party?
Sure.
Etienne was making Eliza see God, and you covered for him, even when coming clean about everything else.
...Yeah. I didn't think Heavy was just going to kill him and...
It's not good. It's really not good.
With my eyes, when I look at her, I see it.
I can see what's happening to her.
There.

But now you know, we can work together. Can you... build a telepathic replacement?
I could, but it won't help. The messages starting again after just long enough for me to build tech?
She's desperate, but she's not stupid.
There's got to be something else.
Okay... I guess this is Come Clean Tuesday.
I'm an Atomic.
I know fundamental truths about reality--and by knowing where reality can be kicked around, I built my magic system.
I taught the Pyramid whatever tricks I wanted to.
Oh. That makes sense. I always did wonder how you learned magic when magic is--
A load of bullshit.
I'd have been more polite.
Okay--magic isn't the art of the impossible. It's the art of the ***possible,*** limited by the nature of the world.
This is the infinite-dollar problem.

"Heaven is like a brick wall above us. No movement.
"Hell is this sea. All movement.
"Between the two--a little thread of linearity...
"...and our sad little duck Eliza has tied herself to that. Fundamentally and inextricably."
As long as there's a heaven above and a hell below, she's fucked.
As long as there's a world with time in it, she's fucked.
There's no way out.
I didn't say that.
Because that's the thing--if subjective linear experience is just *gone,* maybe--just *maybe--*all subjective experience goes with it. She'd feel nothing.
I can't be sure but her best chance at an out is finishing what the Queen started.
She can't ever know...

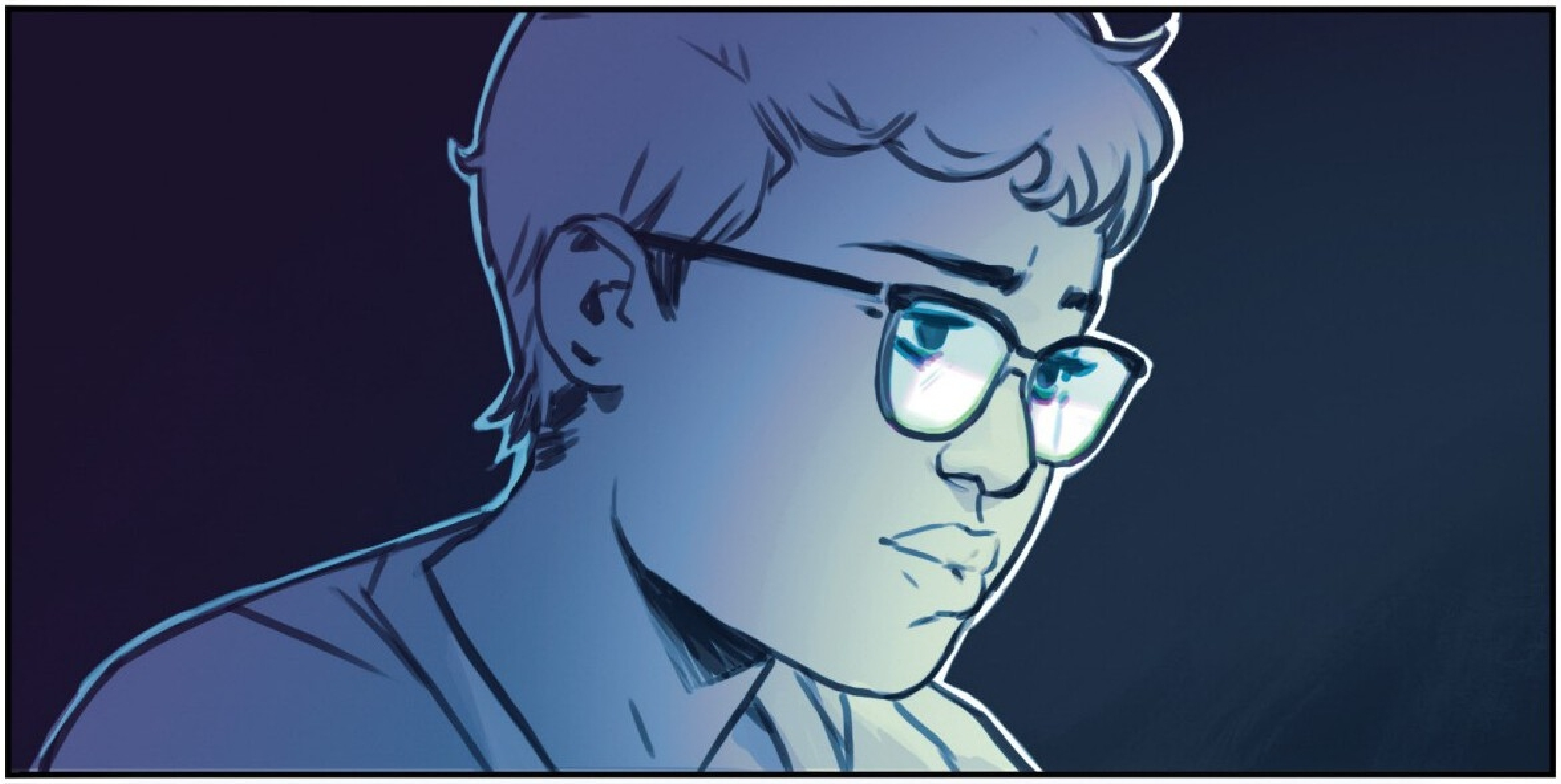
"...she has to hold it together."
I basically need someone to look after me. I'm terrible.
Remind me of stuff. And... sort stuff out. I need a P.A. and a butler.
The hours? I presume you need flexibility?
No, ***strictly*** business hours. Don't let me push that.
I can keep weird time but you shouldn't. Boundaries. I need boundaries.
I believe I can help you, Morishita-san.
Is this a new collection?
Have you a theme?
The same as ever.
The end of the world.

Okay, Eliza, been thinking about what to do next, now we have space.
As have I. I will be saved. I know I will...
...but what am I saved from?
I am a connection to the place. I can turn my senses inwards and--
Don't!
You don't need to. I'm going to unmask and say if people vote for American-me, we'll have an actual Superpower again. I'll be the president.
When I win, the budget will be thrown at you. Money is a superpower, too.
Give me time.
Trust me.
Etienne Lux was a complicated man with a complicated legacy.



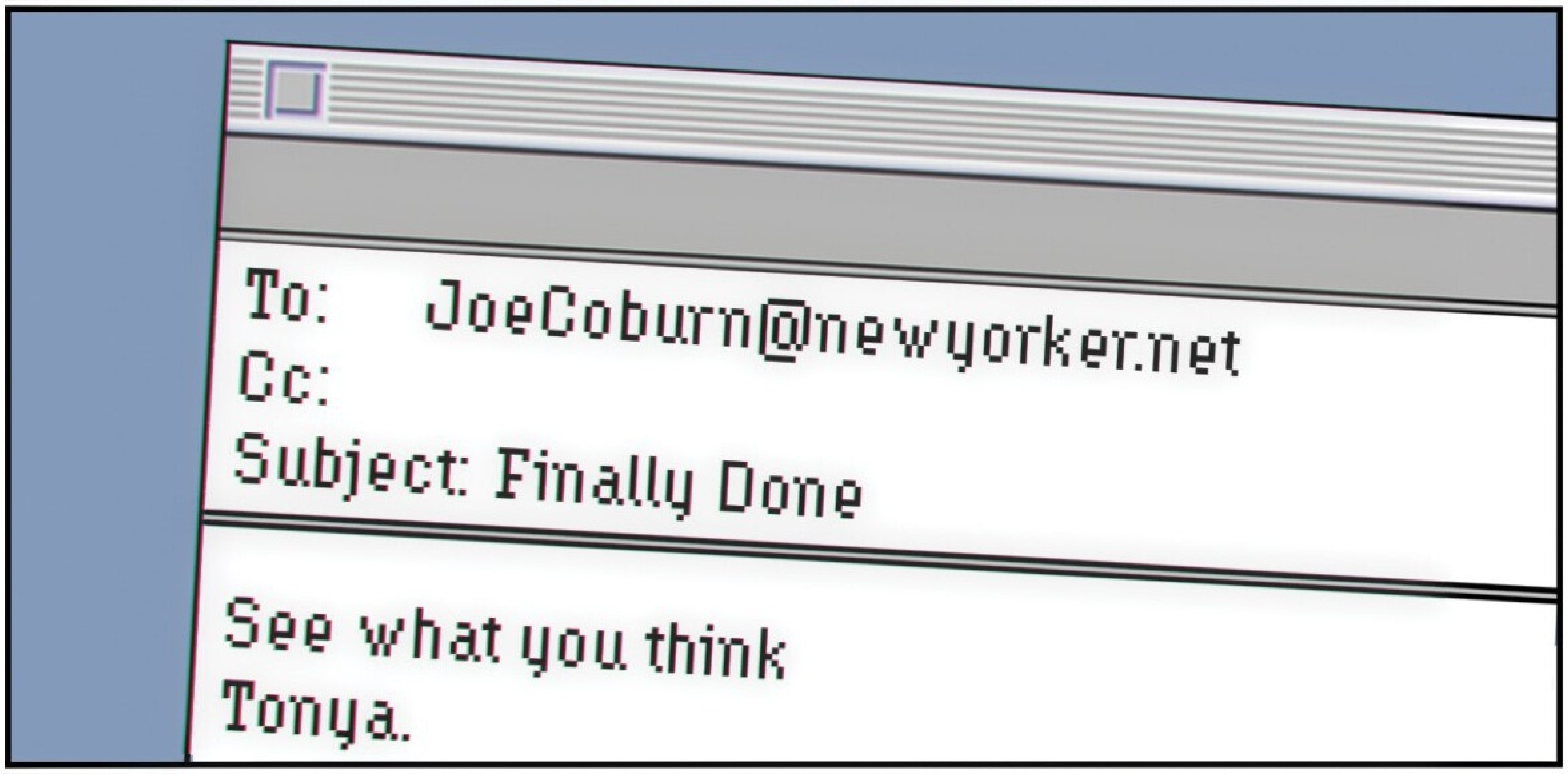
He was protecting the world in the way he knew best.

Conversely, he always thought he knew best.



For example, he was secretly removing the ability of any Atomic that he felt was too powerful.

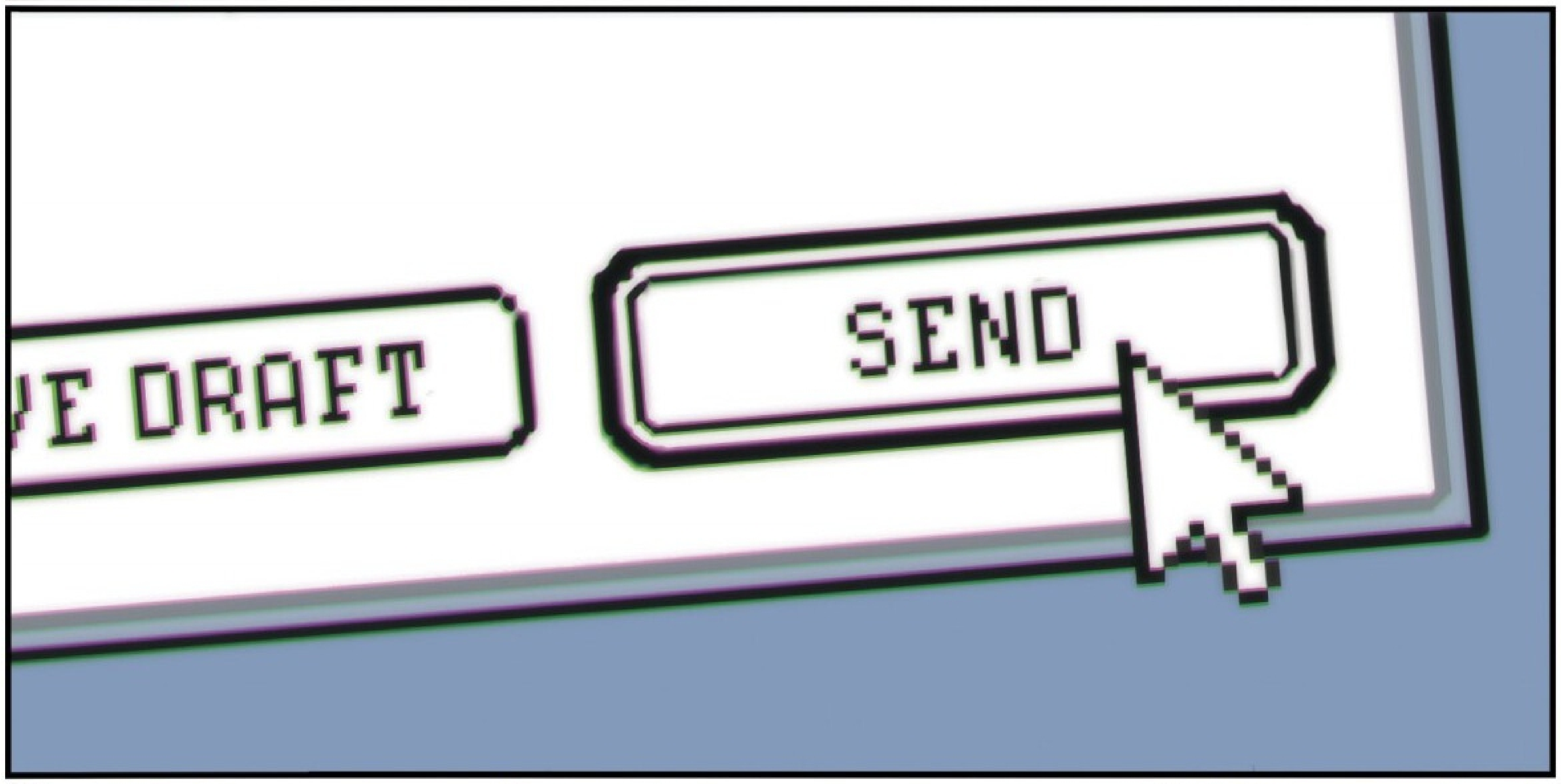
What do I, an Atomic, think of that?


To: JoeCoburn@newyorker.net
Cc:
Subject: Finally Done
See what you think
Tonya.

I arrived at JFK late, and caught the train into town. Some drunk guy was shouting racist shit at some poor family down the carriage.

And I thought...that guy could wake up tomorrow with the power to end the world.

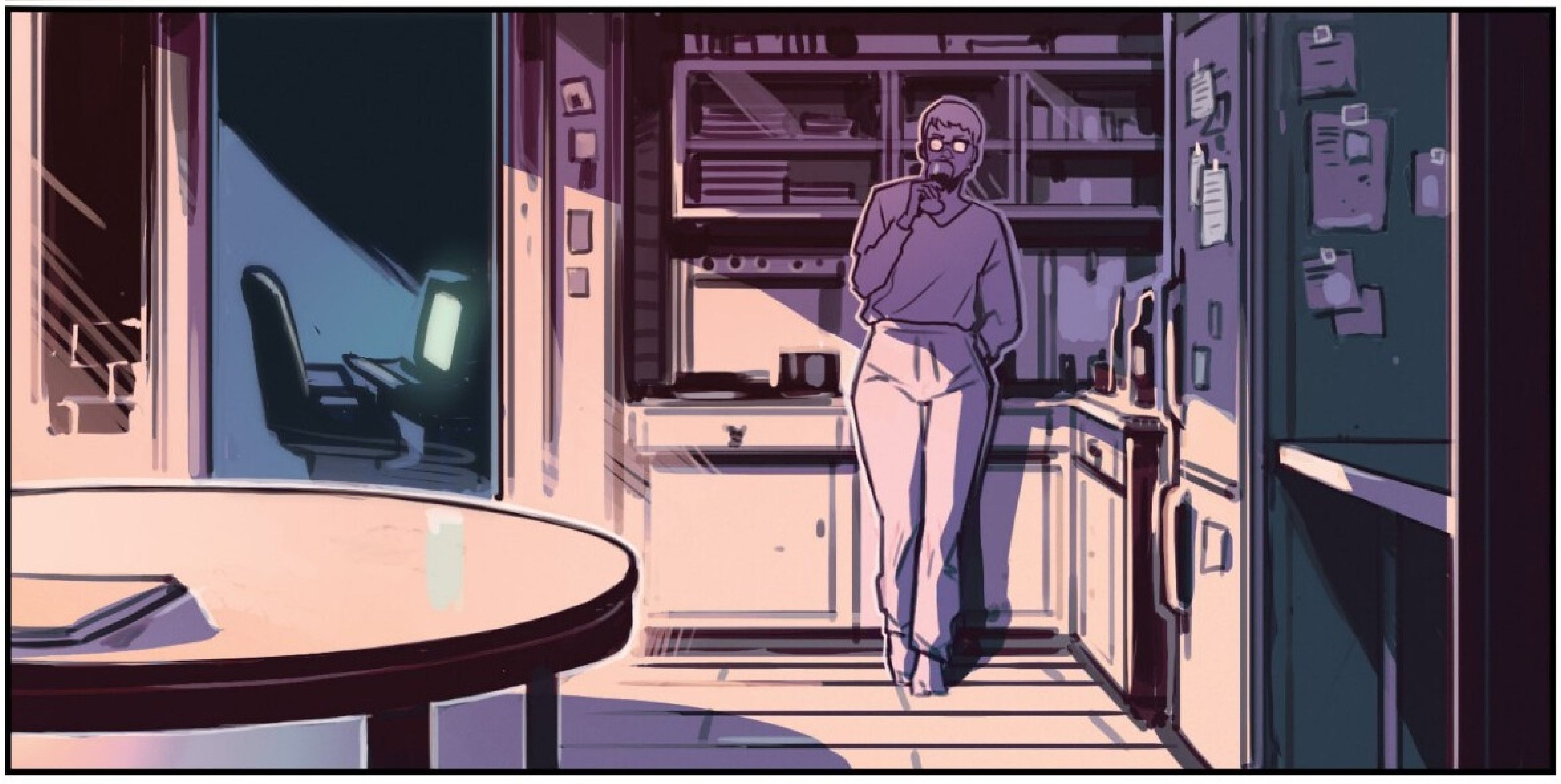
We'd have to try and live with that.


VE DRAFT
SEND

We don't even need to play with hypotheticals.

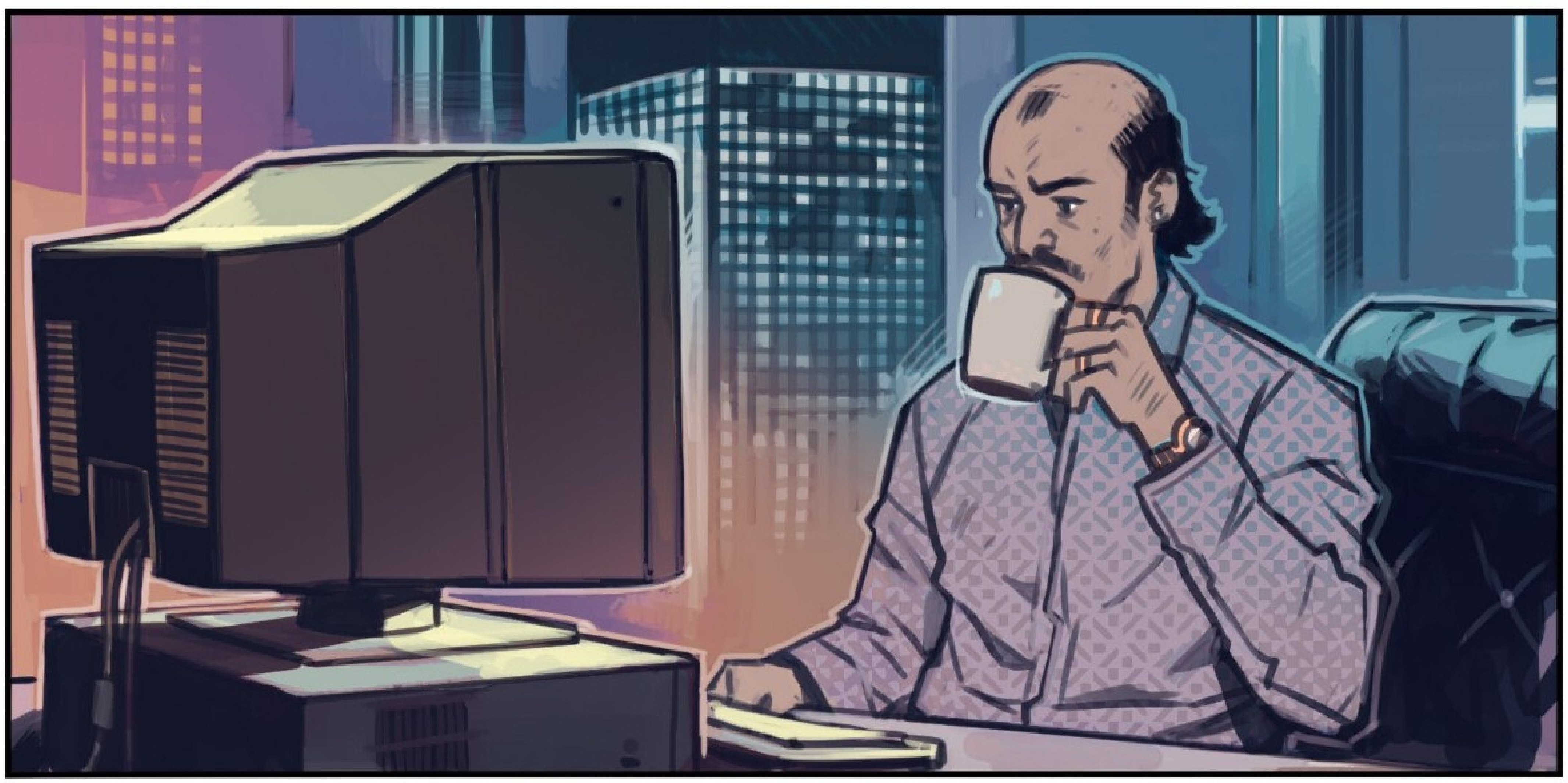
Let's talk about the Superpowers.

Let's talk about the one I know best.



I've walked with Heavy. I've shared a bed with him.

I've laughed at his pretty-bad jokes and ate his pretty-decent breakfasts.

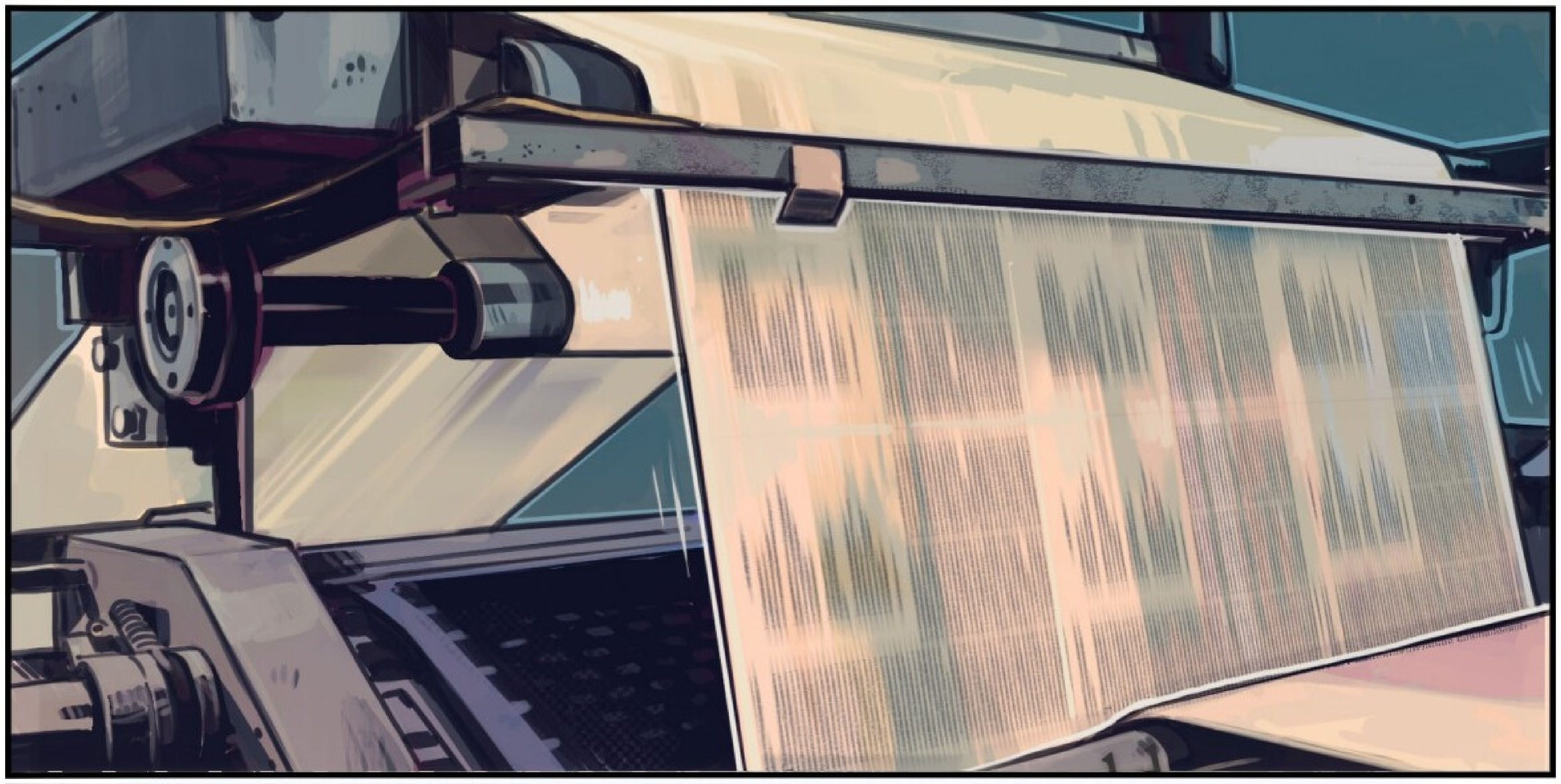


He scared me before,
in the abstract.

Now I know him, he scares
me in the specific.

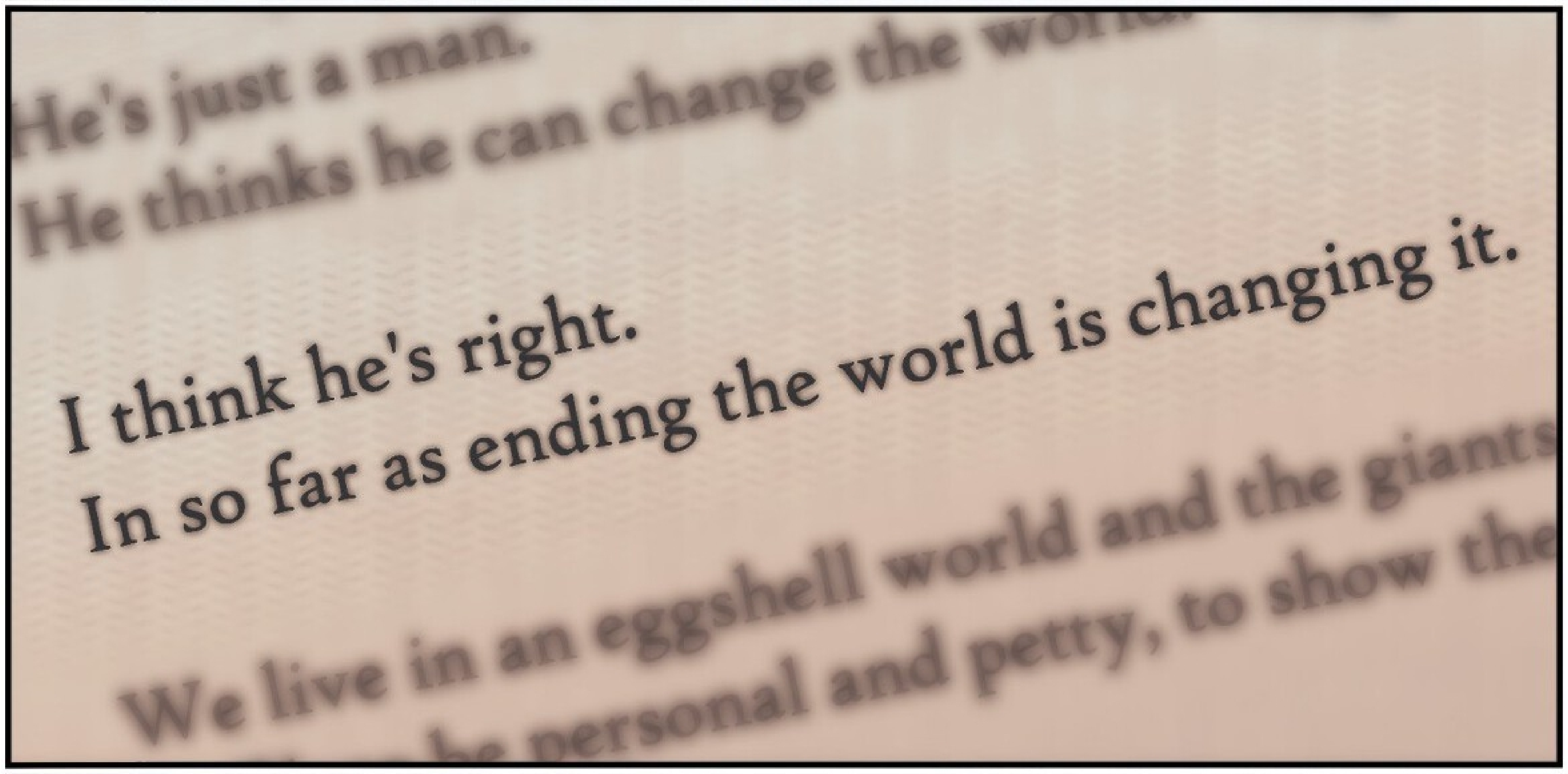
He's not Eliza or Etienne or the vice president in waiting. He's ***understandable.*** He's a good man, as far as it goes. He's normal.

What would ***you*** do if someone messed with your kid? You'd fuck them up. He fucked them up.



He's just
a man.

He thinks he can
change the world.



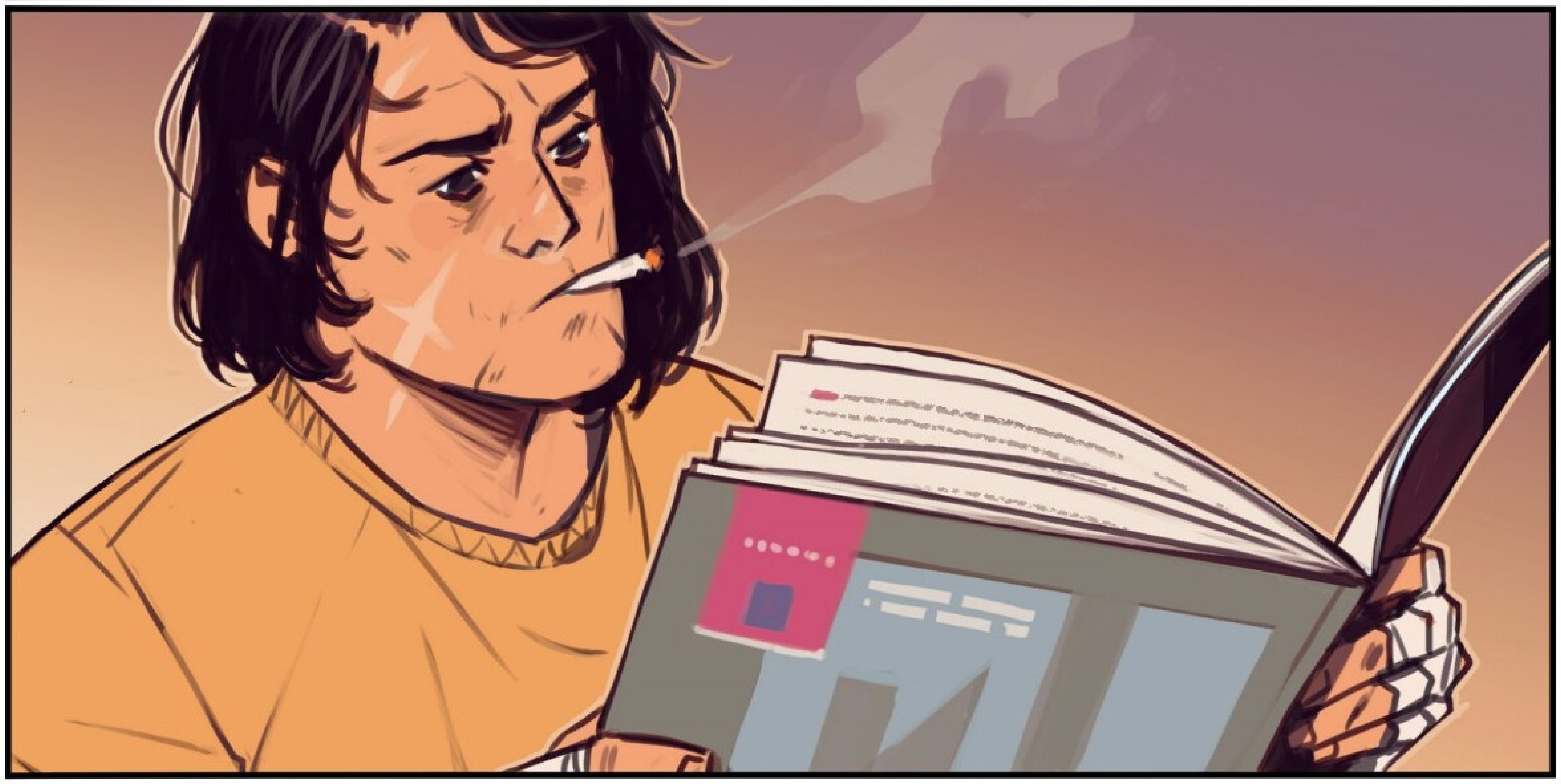
He's just a man.
He thinks he can change the wor

I think he's right.
In so far as ending the world is changing it.

We live in an eggshell world and the giants
he personal and petty, to show the

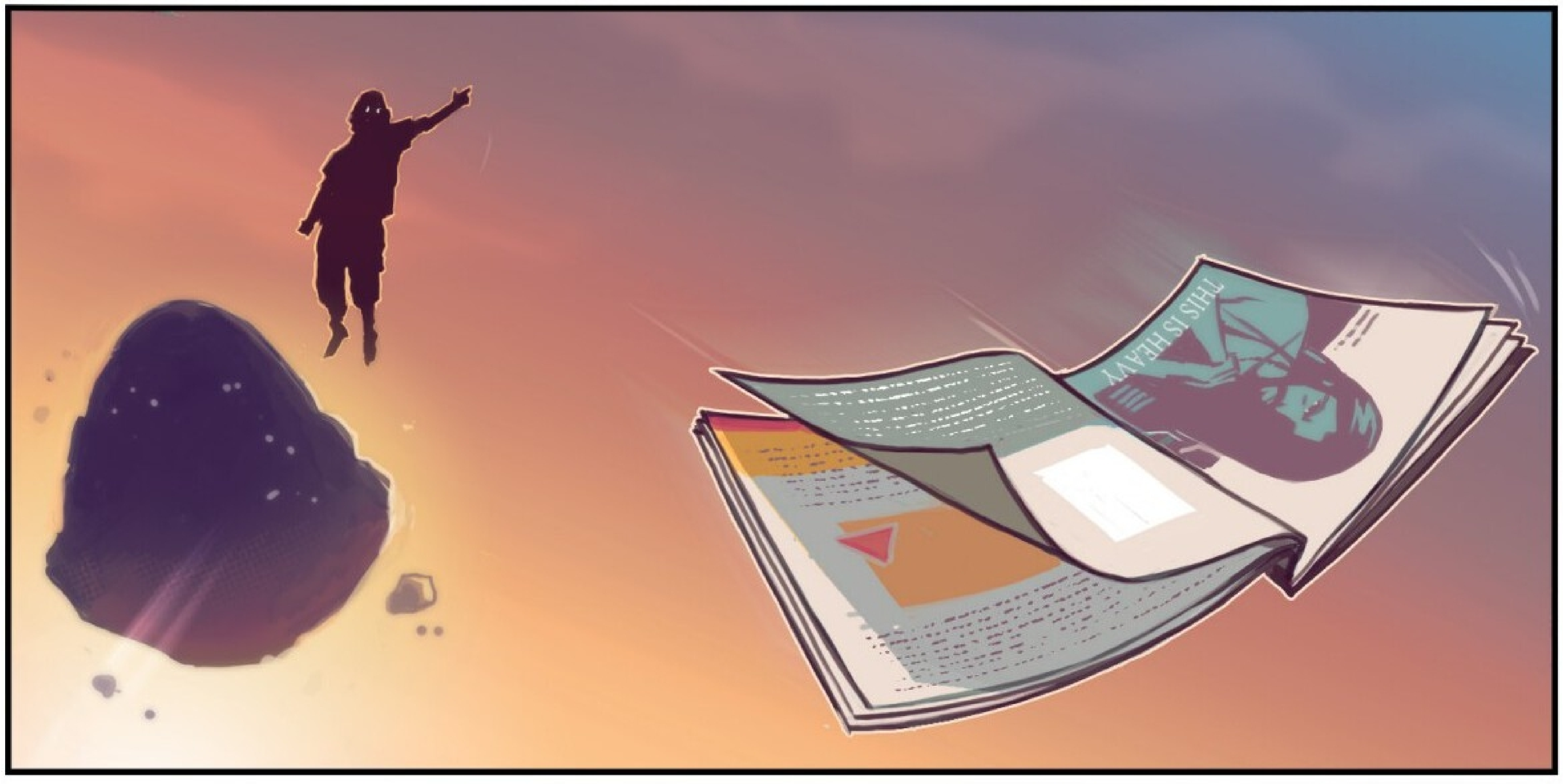
I think he's
right.

In so far as ending the
world is changing it.



We live in an eggshell
world and the giants
are moving.

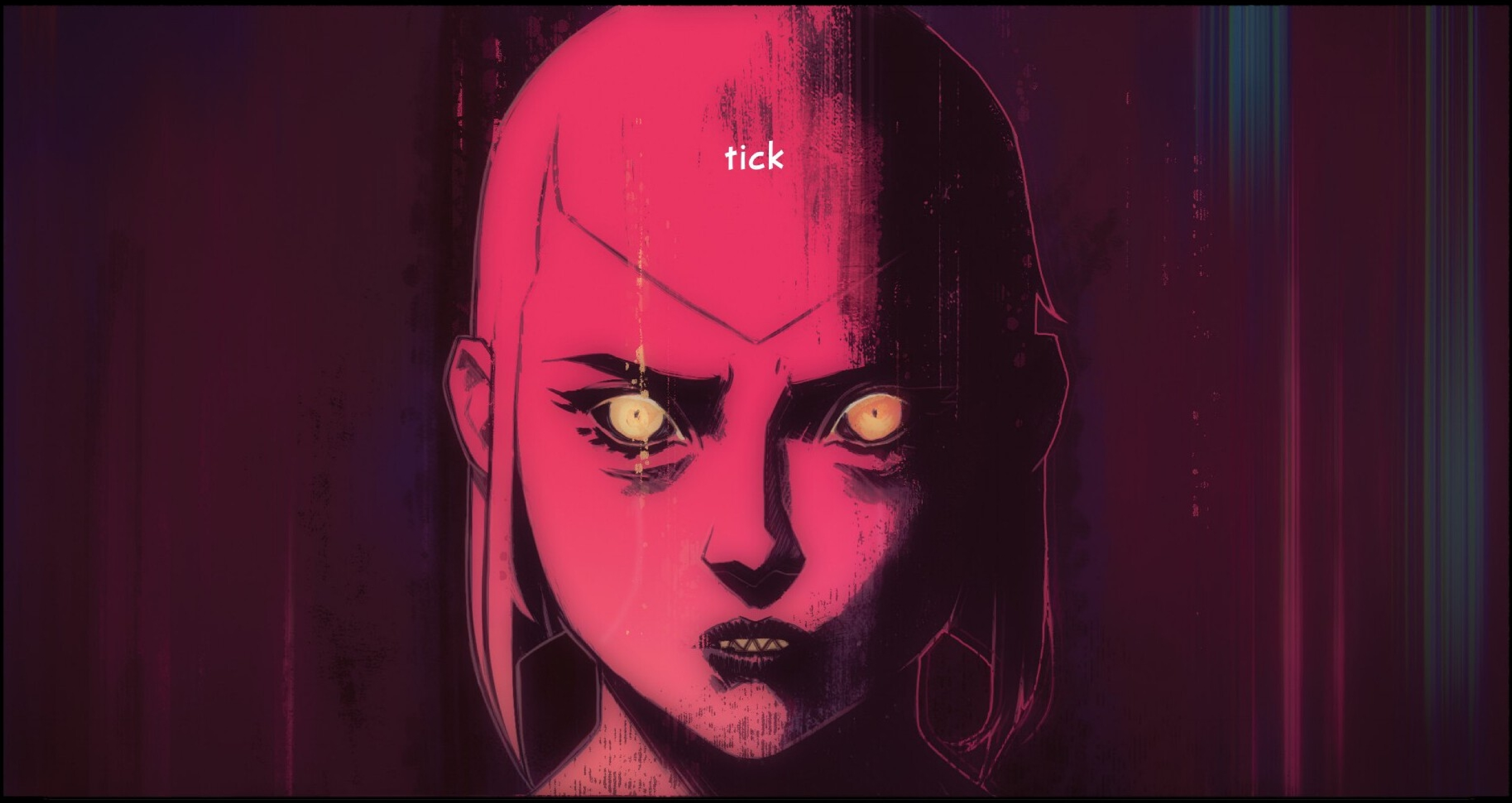
And, to be personal and petty, to show the reason why it's good that I'm ***not*** a Superpower...

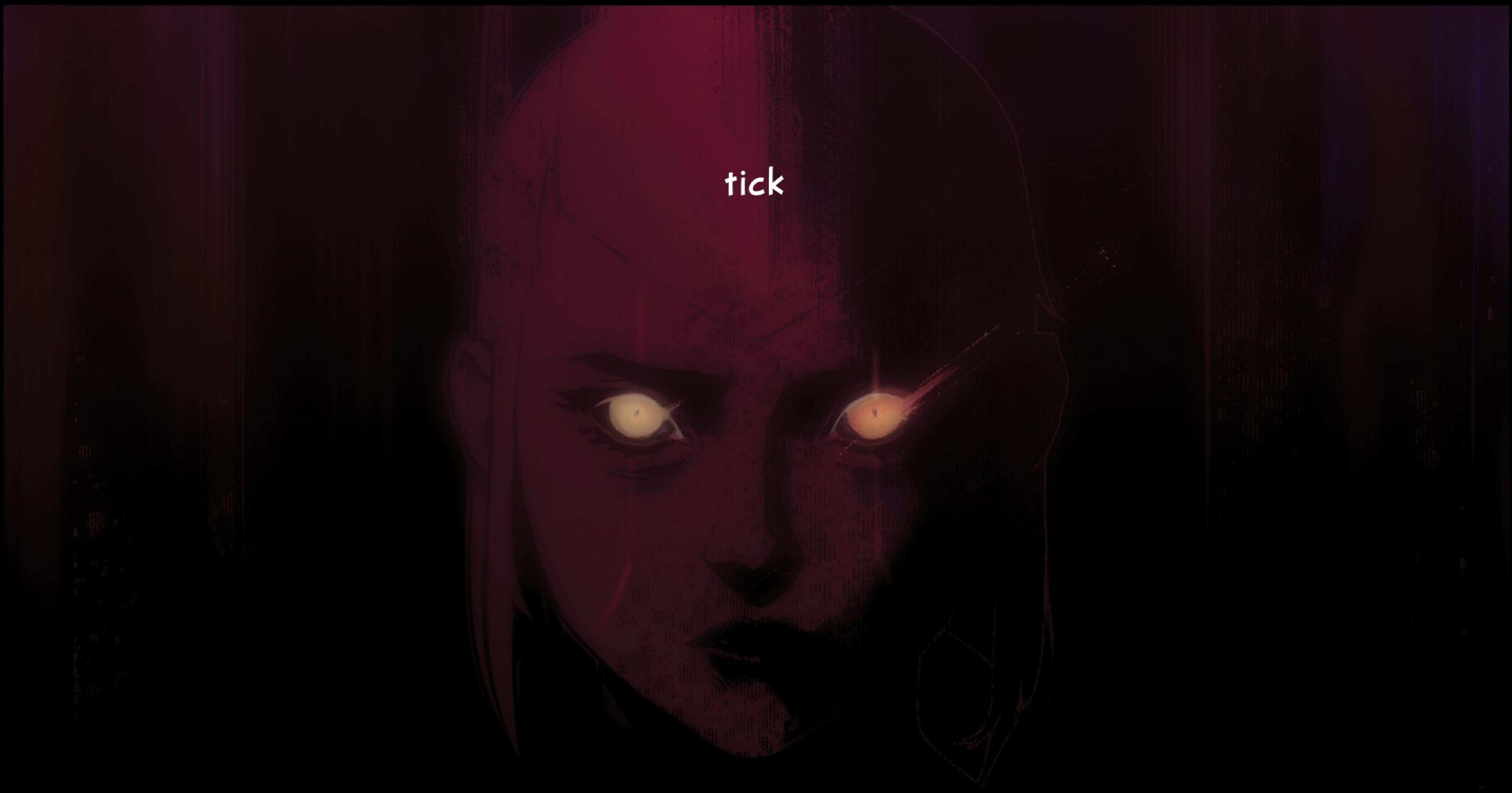


...I hope if it all
comes crumbling down,
Heavy has enough time
to realize Etienne was
right all along.

Trust you?
After a decade of lying.
Trust you.

tick
tick
tick





ELIZA HOLDS IT TOGETHER.

FOR THE NEXT
THREE MONTHS

Chapter Fifteen | **UNIVERSALISM**

THE VATICAN, ETHIOPIA.
God, the Father of mercies, through the death and the resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself...
...and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins...
...through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace...
...I absolve you from your sins.

We'll see you next week, my daughter.
No, Father.
Tomorrow.
Please.
"Her doubts are eating her alive. They cooked up a steroidal version of absolution..."

...a crowd of thousands chanting for her, and it's not touching the sides...
It's always warped around her. Ethiopian Christianity isn't Catholic and they worked with her when she just dropped the Vatican there.
This is more of that.
No, it's not. It really fucking isn't.
She's realising the truth.
She's praying to a God who isn't there to save her from a Hell that definitely is.
That stasis tube idea. That had potential. Work out a way to stop her melting through. It'll give *us* time and give *her* time and...
...just keep at it, Jacky. I believe in you.
Thanks a fucking lot, Valentina.

TOKYO.
I'm not sure this is healthy.
DECONSTRUCTA STILL LIFE
静物
There was nothing about Masumi and me that was healthy.
Izz! Knock it off with the act. Be genuine. Why here?
It feels disloyal not to come.
I think of her all the time.
Yes. We call that PTSD.
It is and it's not. It's...
Oh.
Heh...so do you think *she* thinks of *you?*
"I think I'm going to kill the pope..."

...I'm not saved. So he *must* be an anti-pope.
We must clear the seat of Peter for a true pope to return.
You have to believe you're saved.
I'm not.
You looked.
Yes. And again.
And again. And...

I thought... perhaps I can prepare myself? Steel myself. Train. I can't. I flinch quicker and quicker and...
When I'm "forgiven" I try not to check, but I do and... oh, *Dev.*
It's an itch and if I scratch, I go to a place where dying is a blessed dream...
I am damned for *you,* for *everyone.*
I did it for *them,* in my pride, and...you're all going to *leave me.*
I don't know what I'm going to do.
I know what I could do.
Nothing matters. I could paint the world red, and be no more damned than I am.
I could hurt people to explain. "What I'm doing isn't even the smallest part of what awaits me."
Maybe *then* they'd understand. Maybe then--
Please.
I can save you.

Hah. Dev, you fool. Magus was right. I followed you off the cliff.
I *can't* trust you. I can't trust any of you-- *the angel came from heaven to lie to me.*
I ***can*** save you. The stasis chamber that's nearly working to--
Liar, liar, thrice liar.
There's a way out.

HAVEN.
You know, I put off coming home after I killed Etienne. I was hoping with him gone, Alex would be back to normal.
I was scared he wouldn't be.
I was right to be scared.
I don't understand. Why didn't he just take him over?
Why would he *need* more power if he could already kill a continent?
Plus, he knew he could go bad. He just wanted less of us.
So when he *could* directly influence someone, he goes in and "breaks the locks." *They* can't access the gift. *He* can't. No one else could turn up and do what he wouldn't.
Just get rid of *anything* which could end the wo--
Eliza has just punched a hole to hell.
She's collapsing reality.

Hey!
Is that Superpower stuff? Is Heavy up to something? Or...
Find the people you love.
What's wrong?
Where are you going?!

Magus! Get your team ready.
Eliza has worked out her best shot of getting out of this.
At least you've been preparing this time. Is the Pyramid crew ready to drop?
They must be petrified. And the people in the rest of Pyramid. It'll be quicker than last time but--
I'm so fucking sorry, Valentina.
...Since when are you American?
She gave the world ten years.
No one would be alive without her.
We owe her an out.

Fuck it.
What are you doing?
Some of us have to save the world, Romeo.
!
Heavy! Where are you, where are you?!
...Oh.

Masumi!
Take your drugs!
I was going to! I wasn't sure if it was bad, as there's no Etienne to tell me.
I thought Valentina would come, but she *hasn't,* which is either good or very, very, very bad and--
You shouldn't be here. Go.
You're scared of me.
I'm more scared for you.
I had to talk. I couldn't not talk.
Listen, I was wrong. I had to tell you. It's the stupidest thing, but...
...I was *wrong,* Masumi.

The pile of corpses. It doesn't go to the moon and back forty times.
Whoever told me was just wrong. By two decimal places!
I didn't even think to check. I'm a liberal arts girl! I...
You still have a pile of corpses reaching toward the moon.
I know, I know! But... I kept on thinking: "Things are not as bad as you said. Masumi should know that."
I'm sorry, *Mia Bella*. If we're going, I had to tell you and I had to be with you and I had to--
Now take your drugs!

Boss. The crew's ready.
Forget that. We've got a different mission.
We need to prepare the Pyramid to defend Manchester. Valentina is--
CLK
If we find ourselves sucking your cock...
...we take you down, you fucking arsehole.

You fight her, and it'll be like the Queen all over again.
I think I can kill her.
Go to her, mark her so I can whack her from here. Send the mess I leave into hell before the Pyramid seals it.
Drag her in screaming if you have to. You'd survive in there, right?
For a while, yes, but...why are you *here?*
Oh, no. Heavy. I--
Yeah, it'll be quick, but not *that* quick.
She'll get her shot.
If I'm out here, maybe we can get out of this without losing another continent.
Thank you.

This is Pyramid, Valentina.
Ready to deploy.
Magus changed his mind?
No.
Hey, Eliza.
Bad day, honey?
I would do anything to *just* die...

This will be quick. No pain. No pain for anyone.
The world lives because of me. Is it so wrong to take back what I gave them?
I came here with one job. "Protect humanity."
I can't let you do this.
Please, Valentina. It seems God is not merciful.
Can His angels be?
You have no idea what awaits me.
I do.
Then you--

But you still have to die.
Heavvvy?
I'm sorry, honey.
He's put a singularity inside your head...

He wasn't right.
I was wrong.

Shush, *Mia Bella.*
All over soon.

Chapter Sixteen | THE THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE

MANCHESTER, 2000.
Help me!
God, don't-- Please.
I can't. I--
I'm sorry.

NOW!
Go.

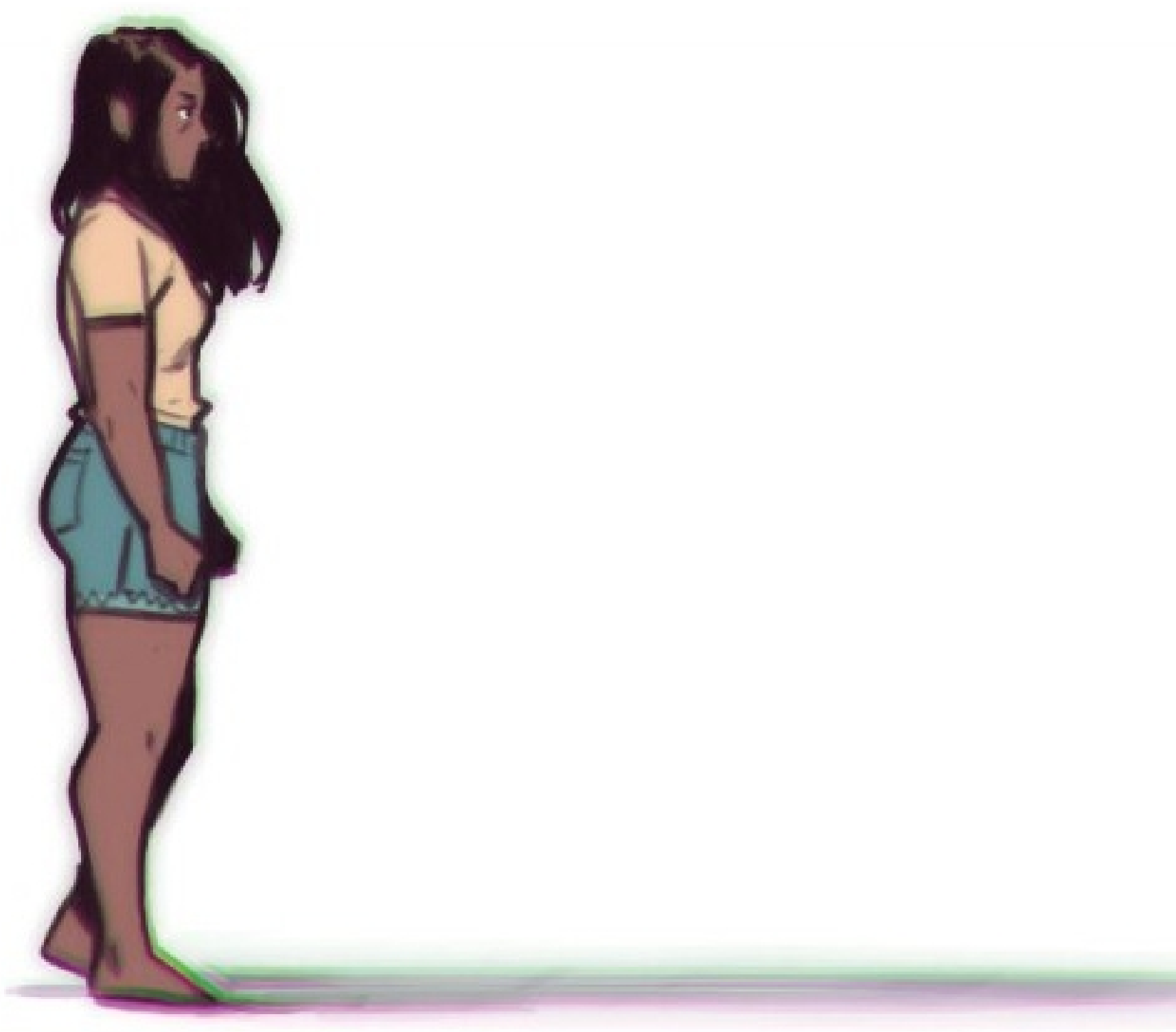
They're going to live.
"The worst global Superpower disaster since 1989 is over..."

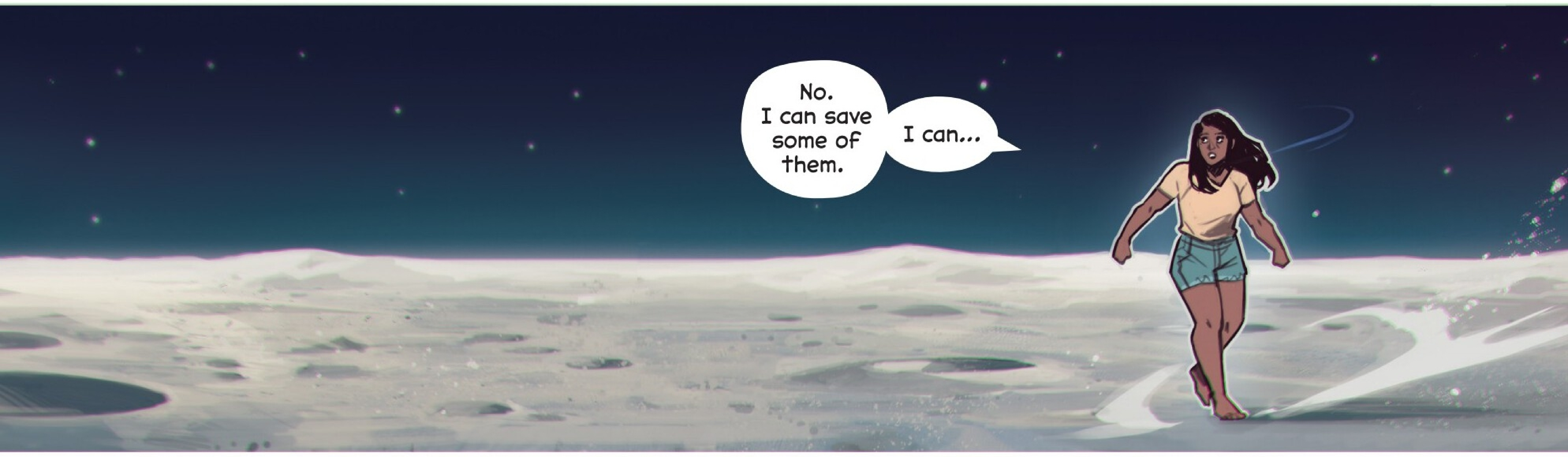
Eliza Hellbound is believed dead, with many more alongside her.
Dr. Eldritch...can you explain what's happened?
Hellbound had opened a hole to a lower dimension, like The Queen in 1989. Thankfully, yet again, the Pyramid were able to seal it.
It is Hellbound's death that's created the unusual fallout.
"In her death throes, she attempted--on a subconscious level--to stabilise herself.
"Imagine fingers clawing into reality, trying to hold on as she slipped off a cliff.
"She failed.
"Instead, random acts of God.
"It's early, but the Pyramid's initial prediction is that the death toll should be no more than thirty million.

"This is a disaster, but we should remember that the similar event in 1989 led to nearly one billion deaths.
"As awful as it is to think, we should all realise..."
...we have been exceedingly lucky.

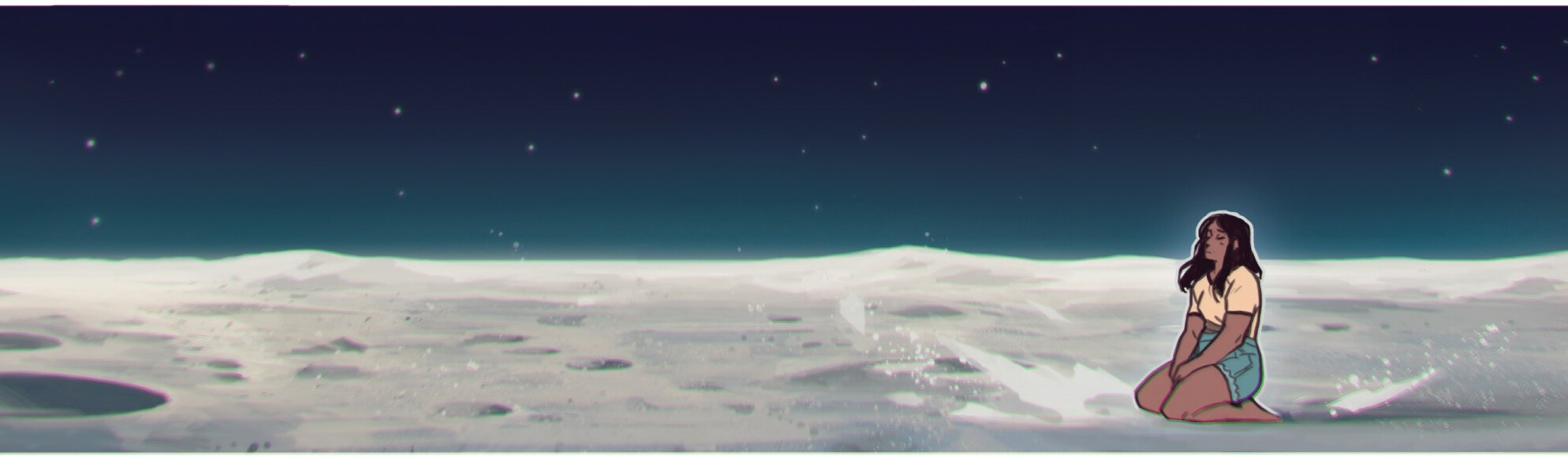
"I love the moon. I go there sometimes, just to look at you all.
"When *you* go there, you'll see yourselves like I see you and then everything will chan--"
"Oh, my sweet Valentina...
...they won't go to the moon now. You've made the long-range nuclear exchange obsolete.
They have no reason for the trip.
You're wrong.
It's not too late.
...No.

RETURN




No.
I can save
some of
them.
I can...

THEY ARE ALL DEAD



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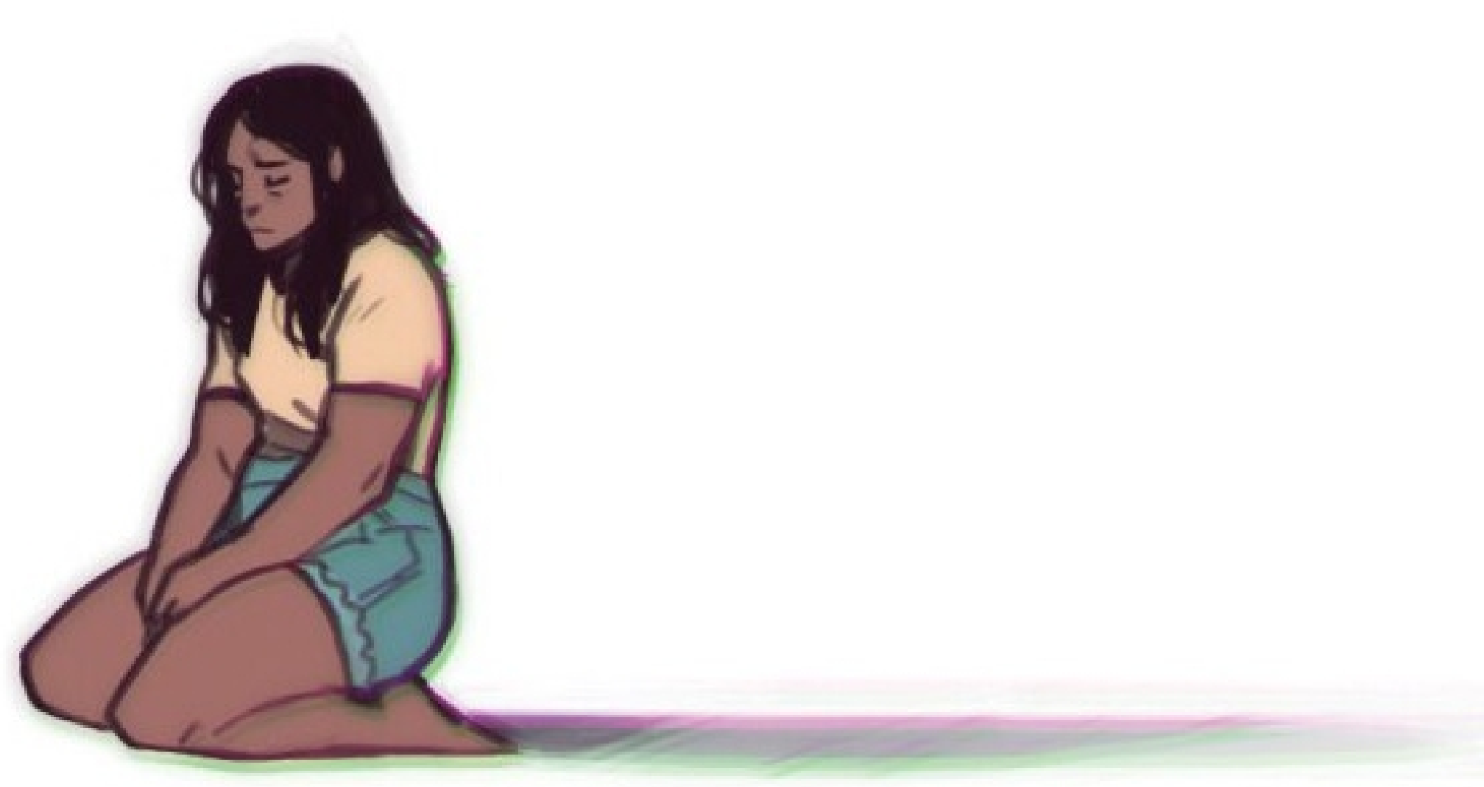

Hell is this sea. All movement.
Between the two--a little thread of linearity...
Drag her in screaming if you have to. You'd survive in there, right?
Your morals will be the death of us all.

DON'T
DO THIS, AND YOU CAN NEVER RETURN

PEACE
LOVE
PIZZA
END THE WAR
NO WAR

PIZZA
The truth of the matter, Valentina, is both difficult and profound.
The real truth is--
Fuck.

LOVE
PIZZA
What's happened?
Are you okay?
No, not really.
You were saying?
Please, Valentina. Don't be a martyr. I don't know what's wrong with you, but it's not a good time.
It can wait.
It can't.

PEACE
LOVE
W 10th St
PIZZA
PIZ
LOVE
EAT IN TAKE OUT
Let's take over the world.

THE POWER FANTASY∞
2026*

*In single issues. It'll be 2027 for the fourth trade.

COVER GALLERY

We still love Caspar's covers, so here they are, in a fancy gallery. We also still like our chums doing covers, so here they are, too. Hurrah!

Issue Twelve: **Chloe Brailsford**
Issue Thirteen: **Juni Ba**
Issue Fourteen: **Jeffrey Alan Love**
Issue Fifteen: **Letizia Cadonici**
Issue Sixteen: **Morgan Beem**
Issue Thirteen special *Youngblood* cover: **Caspar Wijngaard**

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Clayton Cowles | Rian Hughes

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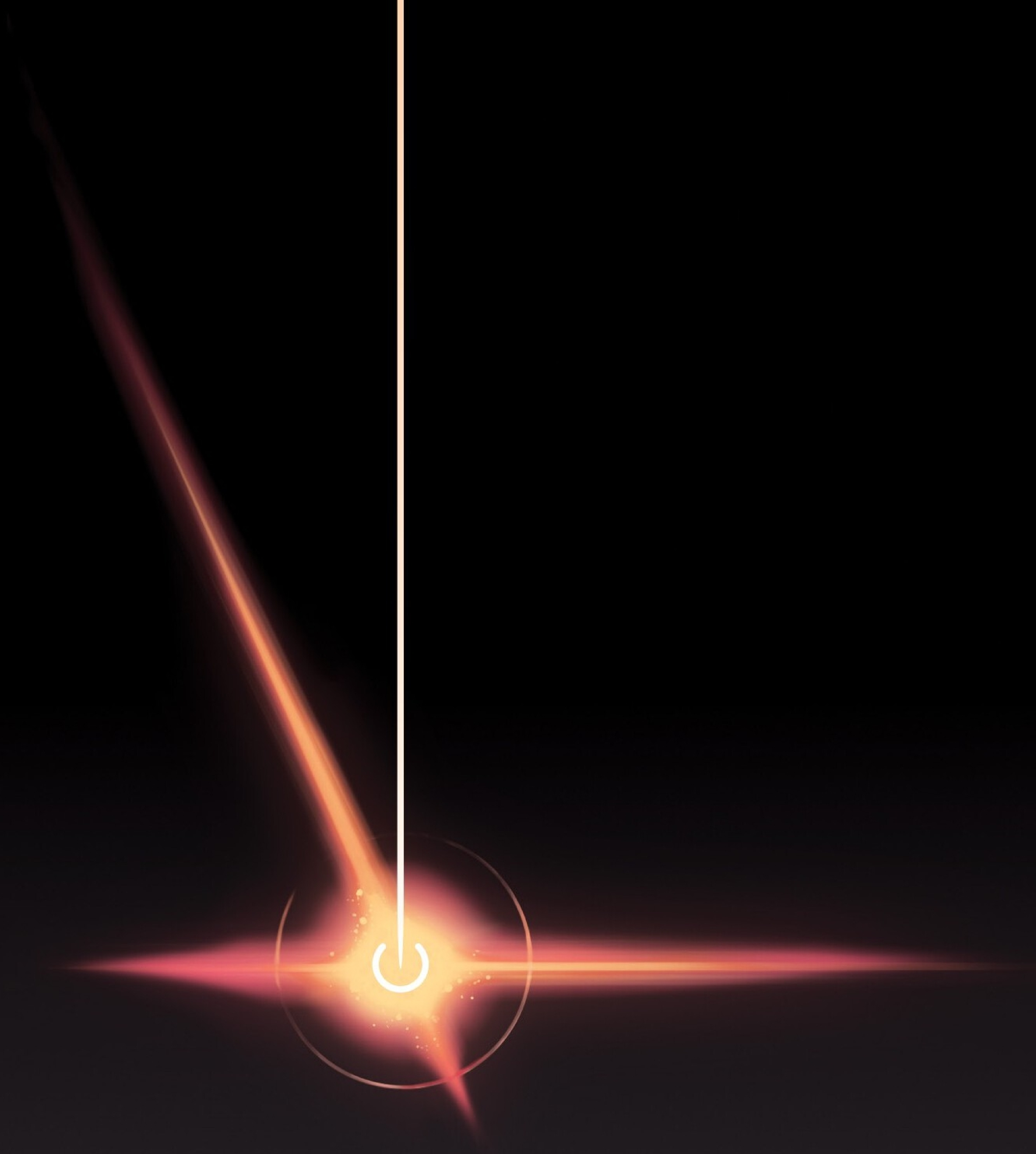

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PLEASE
LOST
SAVE
ME
LOST

image

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THE POWER FANTASY™

"HERO" VS. "HERO" IN A BATTLE TO THE DEATH-- ENCOURAGED BY ETIENNE LUX?!

FURTHER READING

Other books from
the creators of
The Power Fantasy

Drawn by Caspar Wijngaard

HOME SICK PILOTS
3 volumes

LIMBO

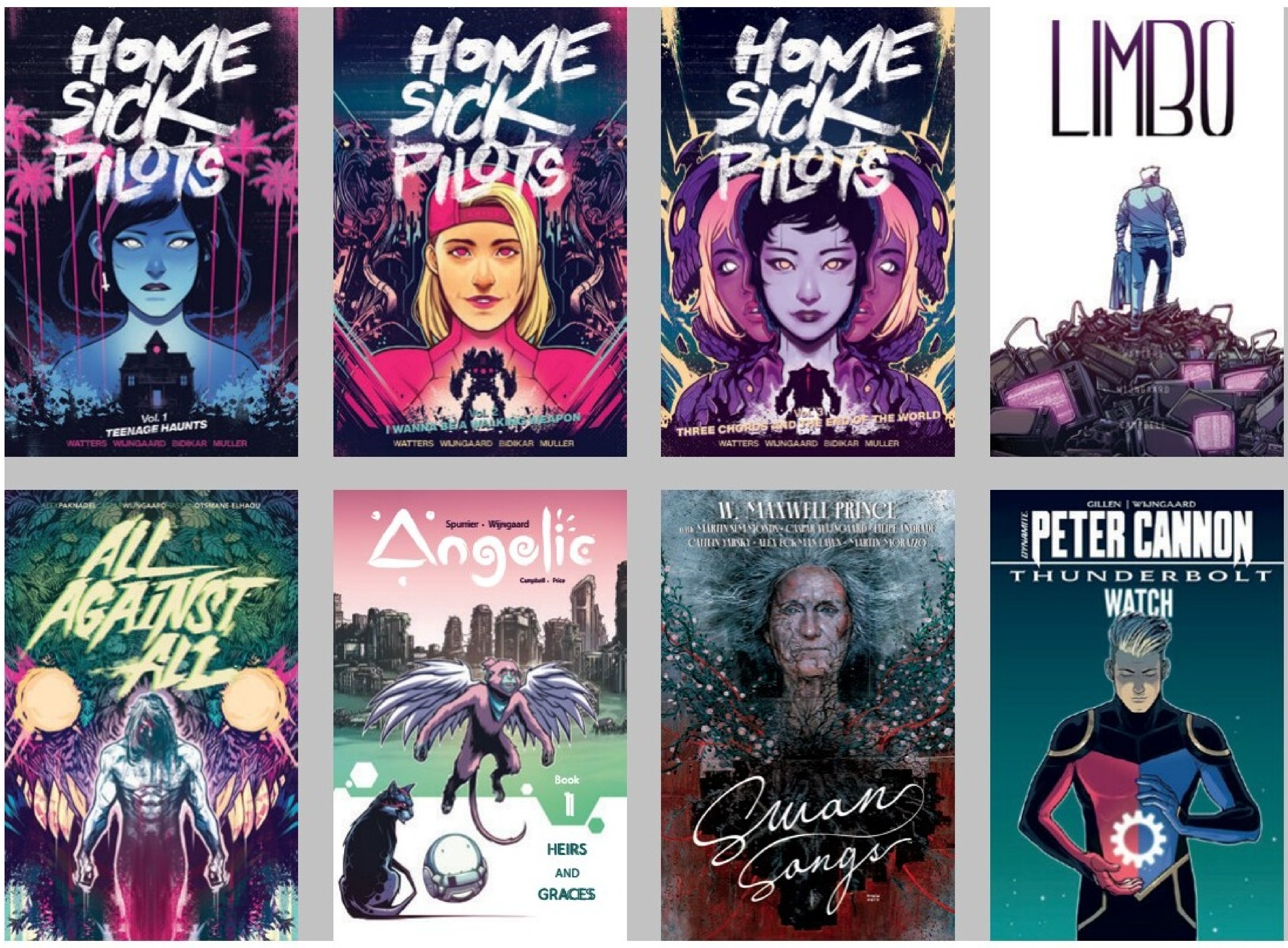
ALL AGAINST ALL

ANGELIC

SWAN SONGS

By Kieron Gillen and Caspar Wijngaard

PETER CANNON: WATCH
(Dynamite)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Written by Kieron Gillen

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THE WICKED + THE DIVINE
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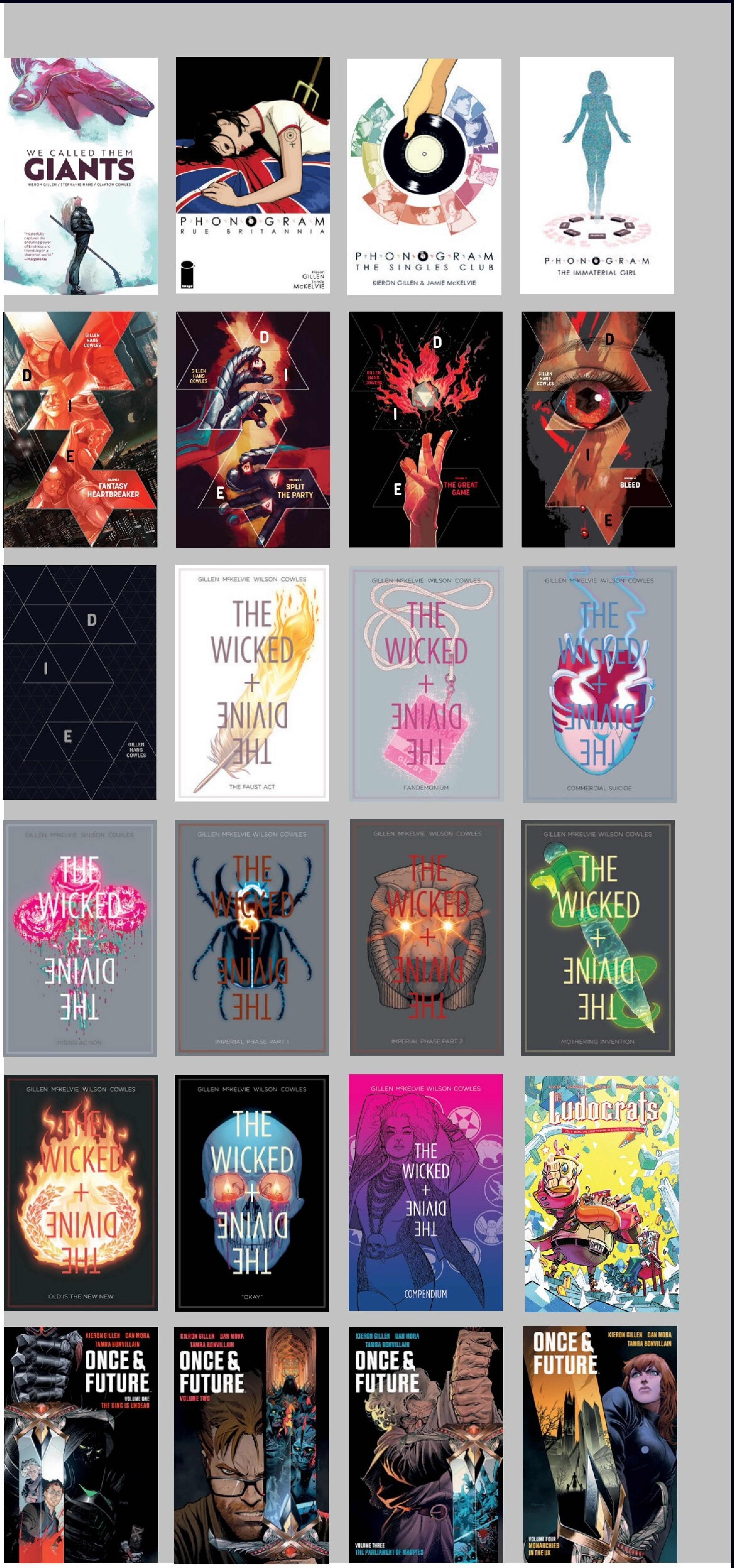
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DIE THE GREAT GAME
DIE BLEED
DIE
THE WICKED + THE DIVINE THE FAUST ACT
THE WICKED + THE DIVINE FANDEMONIUM
THE WICKED + THE DIVINE COMMERCIAL SUICIDE
THE WICKED + THE DIVINE RISING ACTION
THE WICKED + THE DIVINE IMPERIAL PHASE PART I
THE WICKED + THE DIVINE IMPERIAL PHASE PART 2
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ONCE & FUTURE VOLUME TWO
ONCE & FUTURE VOLUME THREE THE PARLIAMENT OF MAGPIES
ONCE & FUTURE VOLUME FOUR MONARCHIES IN THE UK

CREATOR BIOS

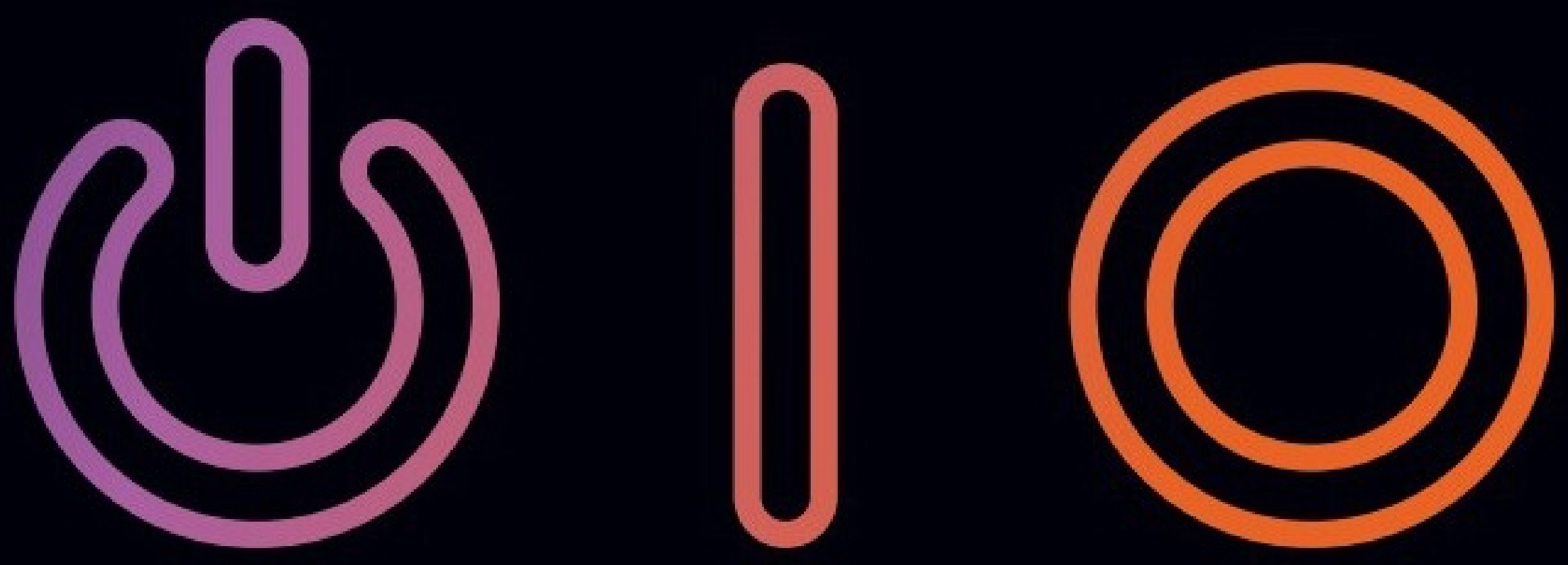
Kieron Gillen is an award-winning writer who has co-created comics such as *The Wicked + The Divine, The Power Fantasy, We Called Them Giants, DIE, Once & Future* and more. He has worked extensively for Marvel on books like *Immortal X-Men, Journey Into Mystery, Young Avengers, Darth Vader, Eternals* and a disturbingly large number more. He is based in Bath, UK. He has no plans to take over the world.

Caspar Wijngaard is an award-winning comic artist from the UK who has worked on titles such as *Star Wars: Doctor Aphra* and *Batman: Detective Comics.* He is also the co-creator of the series *Home Sick Pilots, Limbo,* and *All Against All.* He has no plans to take over the world.

Clayton Cowles is an Eisner Award-winning and Ringo-nominated comic book letterer. Since graduating from the Kubert School in 2009, he has worked for every major publisher. He has worked with Kieron Gillen on *DIE, Eternals, Immortal X-Men, Journey Into Mystery, Phonogram, Star Wars, Three, We Called Them Giants, The Wicked + The Divine, Ludocrats,* and *Young Avengers.* He lives in upstate New York in a house with two cats, which is about all the world he can handle.

Rian Hughes is a graphic designer, illustrator, writer, typographer and sometime comic book artist who has worked for the British and American publishing, music, advertising and comic book industries. He has written and drawn comics for *2000AD* and *Batman: Black and White*, and designed logos for *James Bond, the X-Men, Superman,* and *The Avengers,* collected in the Eisner-nominated book *Logo a Gogo.* He has published two novels, *XX* and *The Black Locomotive*. He took over the world, but the paperwork is a nightmare.

To hear the team talk about the process of creating The Power Fantasy, *listen to our series of interviews on the podcast* Decompressed*. Find it online at decompressed.libsyn.com.*



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Hold on with Kieron Gillen (*The Wicked + The Divine, DIE*) **and Caspar Wijngaard** (*Home Sick Pilots, All Against All*).

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Supervillains,
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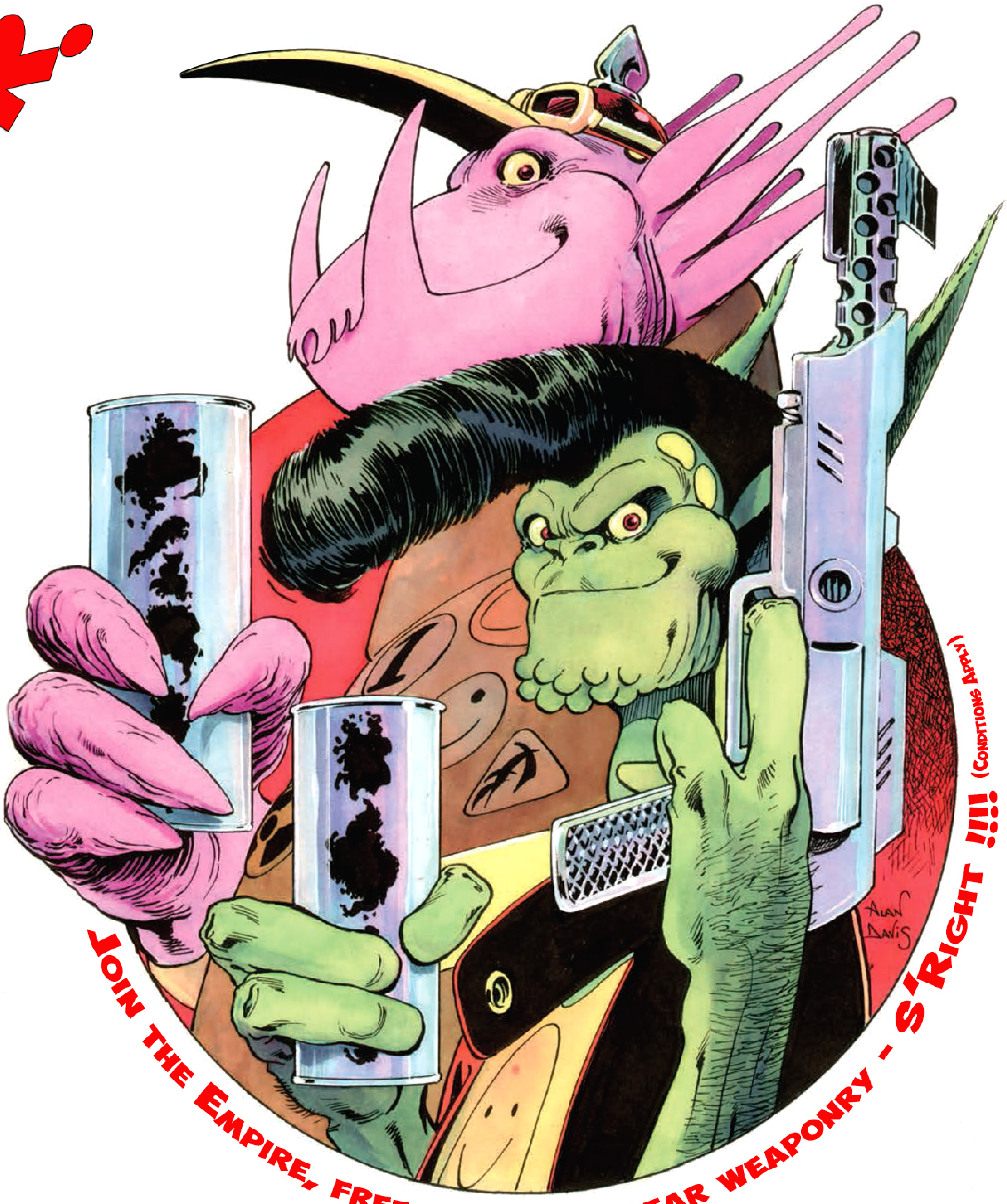
—James Palmer (*Foreign Policy*)

"The best superhero story being told right now isn't coming from Marvel or DC Comics: it is *The Power Fantasy*."
—Ambrose Tardive (*Screenrant*)

"I love mess, and *The Power Fantasy* is rolling in it like a delighted pig in muck."
—Roseanna Pendlebury (*Nerds of a Feather, Flock Together*)

"Kieron and Caspar, please see me after class. We need to talk about your work on these last two issues. We will be sending a call home to Katie."
—Calliope Borden, via email, rating each issue on whether they use more circles or triangles

D.R. & QUINCH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